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CONTENTS / NOVEMBER 2012

FEATURES

COVER STORY

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38 | RISING STAR
ADRIEN BRONER'S UNQUESTIONED TALENT AND KNACK FOR SELF PROMOTION COULD CATAPULT HIM TO STARDOM.
By Ron Borges

44 | NEXT IN LINE
AN ANALYTICAL LOOK AT FIVE GIFTED YOUNG FIGHTERS POISED TO TAKE OVER THE SPORT.
By Doug Fischer

52 | LEGAL SPARRING
THE NFL IS DEALING WITH A GROWING NUMBER OF LAWSUITS RELATED TO CONCUSSIONS. IS BOXING NEXT?
By Norm Frauenheim

OLYMPICS PACKAGE

58 | EPIC FAILURE
THE U.S. MEN CAME HOME WITHOUT A MEDAL FOR THE FIRST TIME AND THE FUTURE LOOKS MURKY.
By Norm Frauenheim

63 | SAVING GRACE
CLARESSA SHIELDS ALLOWED USA BOXING TO RETAIN SOME OF ITS DIGNITY BY WINNING A GOLD MEDAL.
By Norm Frauenheim

65 | GREAT SUCCESS
THE HOST NATION TOOK CONCRETE STEPS TO IMPROVE ITS BOXING PROGRAM AND IT PAID OFF IN MEDALS.
By Gavin Evans

70 | LETTERS FROM EUROPE
THE WOMEN, MAKING THEIR DEBUT IN THE GAMES, WERE THE STARS OF A SMASHING SHOW IN LONDON.
By Gareth A Davies

76 | ON STAGE
MIKE TYSON FOLLOWED IN A LONG LINE OF FORMER BOXING STARS WHO VENTURED INTO THE THEATER.
By Don Stradley

81 | OH, DANNY BOY
DANNY GARCIA AND FATHER ANGEL GARCIA MIGHT'VE LAID THE GROUNDWORK BEFORE HIS KO OF AMIR KHAN.
By Bernard Fernandez

87 | RAISING AN OPTION
VETERAN REFEREE JOE CORTEZ CONTENDS THAT ELEVATING JUDGES WOULD IMPROVE THEIR ABILITY TO SCORE FIGHTS.
By Michael Rosenthal

92 | MANCINI REVEALED
MARK KRIEGEL'S BOOK, THE GOOD SON: THE LIFE OF RAY "BOOM BOOM" MANCINI, IS A MUST-READ.
By Tom Hauser

97 | WHAT NOW?
AMIR KHAN MUST REBUILD AGAIN AFTER HIS STUNNING FOURTH-ROUND KNOCKOUT LOSS TO DANNY GARCIA.
By Gavin Evans

DEPARTMENTS

4 | RINGSIDE

5 | OPENING SHOTS

10 | COME OUT WRITING

11 | READY TO GRUMBLE
By David Greisman

15 | ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES
Jabs and Straight Writes by Thomas Hauser

20 | BEST I'VE FACED: GLEN JOHNSON

22 | SIX PACK
By T.K. Stewart

24 | OUTSIDE THE ROPES
By Brian Harty

26 | RING CARD GIRL

30 | RING RATINGS PACKAGE

102 | RINGSIDE REPORTS

106 | FIGHT RESULTS

111 | WOMEN'S BOXING
By David Avila

113 | LOOKING AHEAD
ANDRE WARD VS. CHAD DAWSON
By Don Stradley

114 | AT THE FIGHTS

COVER IMAGE: **BRUCE CRIPPEN**

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MAKE IT FUN, NOT OBNOXIOUS

By **Michael Rosenthal**

If I had to predict who the next superstar in boxing will be, I'd say Adrien Broner.

All the ingredients seem to be there: Great athlete, great speed, excellent boxer, tremendous power and charisma. He also speaks English as a first language, which is helpful in terms of marketing. I'm not sure another boxer in the world has as much going for him.

We must wait to see how this plays out, though. Victories over the likes of Daniel Ponce de Leon and Vicente Escobedo were important but hardly the ultimate litmus tests. Broner (24-0, 20 knockouts) must beat a pound-for-pound-caliber opponent or two — someone like Juan Manuel Marquez — before we anoint him the king of anything.

I don't see anyone beating him, even Marquez. I think he'll be able to take care of business in the ring in the foreseeable future.

Outside the ring? That might determine how popular he will become.

Broner's playful antics are clever. The hair-brushing shtick is simple and fun. And the fake proposal to his girlfriend in the ring immediately after he stopped Escobedo was entertaining.

The manner in which Broner handled his inability to make weight for that fight wasn't entertaining. He came in overweight … then did again after the sides agreed upon a new weight … and then didn't seem to care one iota.

Broner in effect paid off Escobedo to take part in a fight that one could argue was unfair, Broner having missed the 130-pound limit by 3½ pounds. He dismissed criticism by saying simply that he is growing.

That's a good way to lose fans, who admire ability but also expect some level of respect for the rules. Broner flouted the rules, in effect saying in an arrogant manner that they don't apply to him. He came off as a jerk.

If I had been advising him, I would've suggested he show some contrition. When you make a mistake, acknowledge it. Fans are forgiving.

I believe Broner can go two ways. He can go in the direction of Floyd Mayweather Jr., who he admires. Mayweather plays the bad boy — which has proved to be lucrative — but he does it in a mean-spirited way. He's not likeable.

Broner can also go the direction of Muhammad Ali, the master at playing the rogue. The difference was that Ali did it tongue in cheek; he was playful. He genuinely likes people and, in general, they like him. I hope Broner follows the lead of Ali. Keep it fun, keep it playful. You can make a lot of money without being a jerk, too. ■

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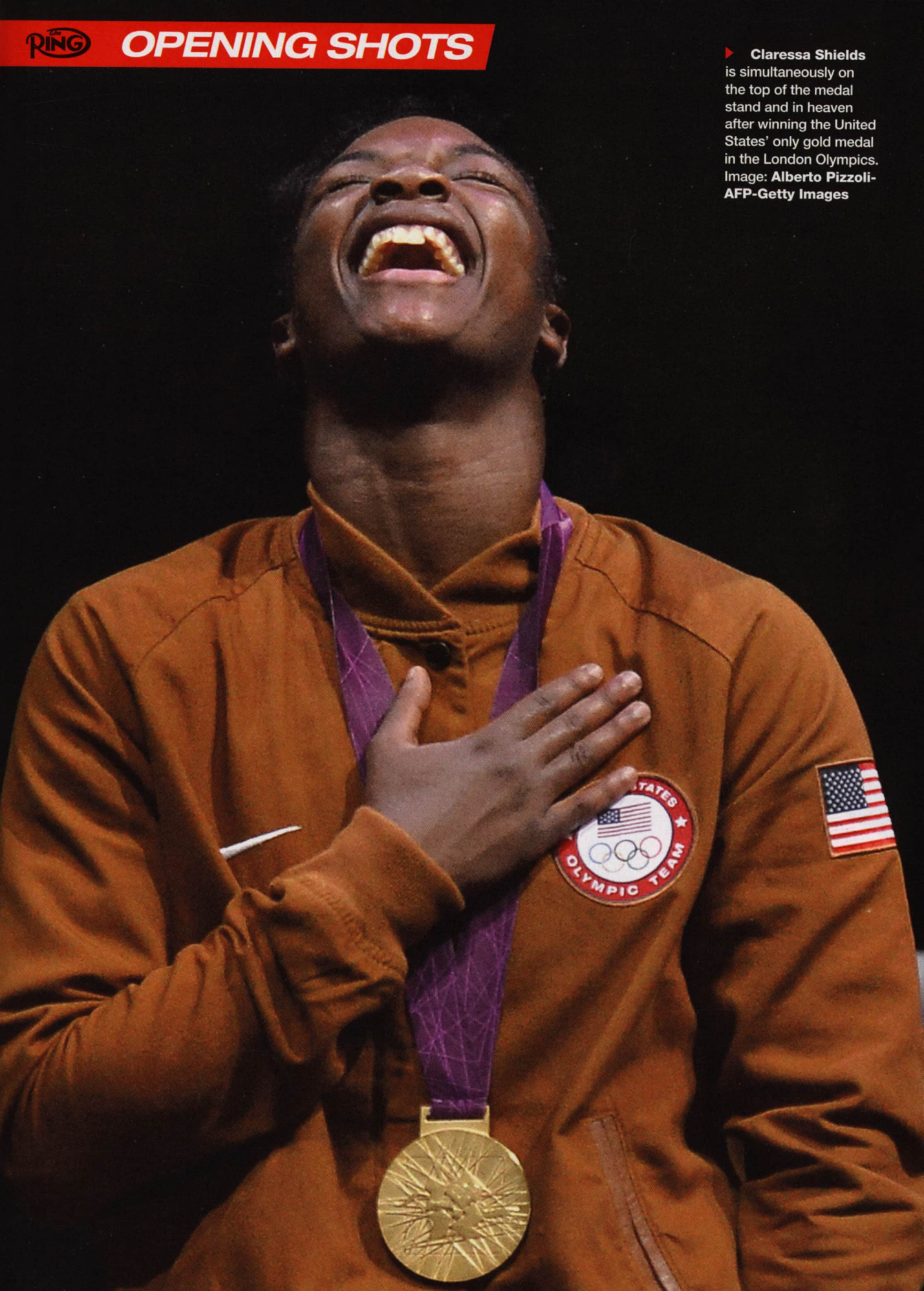

Claressa Shields is simultaneously on the top of the medal stand and in heaven after winning the United States' only gold medal in the London Olympics. Image: **Alberto Pizzoli-AFP-Getty Images**

GAZİ

Robert Guerrero (right) found the target more than enough to defeat then-unbeaten **Selcuk Aydin** by a unanimous decision in Guerrero's first welterweight fight July 28 in San Jose, Calif. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

An estimated 13,000 fans filled **Queen Victoria Square in Hull, England,** on Aug. 14 to welcome home Olympic boxing gold medalist **Luke Campbell** and hammer-throw finalist **Alex Smith.** Image: **Paul Smith**

Image: Craig Bennett

RELEASE THE HEAVIES

Loved the latest on-line poll question: Who is the best American heavyweight prospect? But let's get serious: Who of that group has been tested seriously? Seth Mitchell? His best win is over Chazz Witherspoon! I love watching him fight and I do root for him in all his fights, but it's hard to put him at the top. I think Tor Hamer is the best fundamentally and Deontay Wilder is also very close to being ready. Hamer won the Prizefighter competition, and if he were more active, I think he would turn some heads. I like all of the guys listed (see poll results on Page 19) but I think that the limited opposition and how slowly they are moved kills the fan base. I was excited about Wilder two years ago and Mitchell last year, but the slow pace kills my enthusiasm. I understand development, so I do not advocate tossing them to the Klitschkos just yet, but give us some Top 20-type guys. There are plenty out there.

Dan Marvin
Dupont, Wash.

OCH!

As a leading Scottish boxing historian may I point out that flyweight James McKenzie, who was outpointed by the U.S.A.'s Fidel LaBarba in the Paris 1924 Olympic flyweight final for the gold medal, WAS NOT—as your article in THE RING for September 2012 claims — "ENGLISH"! James McKenzie was no more "English" than Benjamin Franklin was Mexican!

James McKenzie was born in Edinburgh, Scotland's ancient capital city, and boxed for Scotland's still-surviving oldest amateur boxing club, the Leith Victoria, with his brother, George McKenzie, who won bantamweight bronze at the Antwerp Olympics in 1920.

The latter fact makes the McKenzies the Scottish equivalent of the American Spinks brothers — Leon and Michael — as both McKenzies are the first and only Scottish boxing brothers to win Olympic boxing medals.

James and George McKenzie were the nephews of Scottish flyweight and featherweight James "Tancy" Lee, who beat Jimmy Wilde in January 1915 for the British flyweight title in London. Lee then went on to become the first Scottish boxer to win a Lonsdale belt outright at featherweight and the only Caledonian boxer to win Lonsdale belts at two different weights.

James McKenzie of England!! That's like me saying that George Washington was a native of Peru!

Brian Donald
Kirkcaldy, Scotland

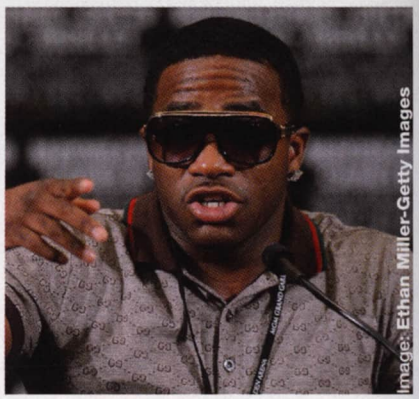
Image: Ethan Miller-Getty Images

SHTICK AND MOVE

I don't know how good Adrien Broner is, but here's what I do know: Mr. Broner, if he can fight, can be very successful. I had the privilege of watching his fake-out marriage proposal and it was brilliant. If this is what Mr. Broner can provide on a regular basis, then the kid can damn near bring back boxing from the dead. I don't know if Mr. Broner can take a punch or throw a punch, I don't know how he will react in a real fight or how he will act when he is getting his ass kicked. But his shtick was beautiful. Here's a kid who doesn't even have a belt yet, at least not a recognized belt, and he's starting with the show business. Great act. Now if he can fight, we might have found something. I realize he is undefeated and has a great KO percentage, but I am close to 50 and they could go in the alley and get me lined up with some guys and have me with the same record! So let's find out first if the kid can fight. And one other fact: I think it was a great injustice that after the fight nobody from the announcing team mentioned that the great Aaron Pryor was in the ring.

Barry Abbott
Takoma Park, Md.

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Adrien Broner didn't handle the fallout from his inability to make weight as well as he did **Vicente Escobedo**. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

BRONER: CAN OR CAN'T MAN?

By: **David Greisman**

Failing to make weight in and of itself is an offense, though not offensive. The problem with Adrien "The Problem" Broner, however, is that he didn't just fail to make weight. He also did so on purpose, then refused to lose the extra pounds, then once again came in over an agreed-upon limit the following day — and then acted as if there was nothing wrong with any of this.

It was offensive that Broner shrugged off questions of responsibility, insisting matter-of-factly that he had not wanted to face Vicente Escobedo at 130 pounds, that at just 22 years old (now 23) his body was still maturing, and that his presumed pre-fight diet had nothing to do with his being overweight. The photos he tweeted of various desserts and fast food be damned.

"I don't think ice cream sundaes make you grow out of a weight class," he said.

It was offensive that the self-proclaimed "Can Man," who had said earlier this year that "anybody can get it: AfriCANS, AmeriCANS, DominiCANS, MexiCANS," was a Can't Man, or Won't Man, when it came to fulfilling the terms of his contract. He had been busy posting photos on Twitter of himself on toilets, but hadn't spent enough time, well, you know. (Maybe the toilet is the "can" referred to in his nickname.)

Broner already has four kids and an apparent penchant for eating for five. And that's just out of the ring. Once the television cameras go on, he feeds on opponents softer than the Twinkies on which he snacks. It's offensive that a boxer who is

New promoter **50 Cent** had already taken center stage at events leading up to **Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s** fights. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

so clearly gifted and so remarkably skilled will then get an additional advantage of not having to drain his body like his already-overmatched opponent Escobedo had to.

Broner is pulling in hundreds of thousands per bout despite facing lesser foes in the 130-pound division, and he very well might be allowed to do the same at lightweight. Maybe those are the cans — tomato cans — referred to in his nickname.

When a promoter and network favor a fighter no matter whom he faces or what he does, anointing him as a future star and forgiving the unprofessional in favor of the profitable, it's no surprise that an immature but immensely talented young man who's been prematurely entitled and prematurely world titled will get away with whatever the "Can Man" can. And that, like Broner's other nickname, is a problem.

***

Given the number of old men in the sport — with four octogenarians alone between Bob Arum, Don King, Larry Merchant and Jose Sulaiman — it's always good to introduce the younger and newer.

That's not to say that Golden Boy Promotions is better than Arum and King, that Max Kellerman should supplant Merchant or that various other alphabet soup organizations will make your stomach turn any less than Sulaiman's WBC. But fresh faces can liven up a sport steeped in old habits. It's understandable, then, that the promotional venture and potential promotional adventures of rapper 50 Cent and boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr. has started conversations long before their TMT (The Money Team) Promotions has even staged its first card.

The buzz truly began once 50 Cent started his transition from bling to the ring, getting his promotional license and signing TMT's first fighters, an act that presumably didn't involve calling boxers up on pretend phones made of stacks of $100 bills.

There's only so much that can be said for now, though, as what remains to be seen is what the company will do. Promoting is like any other business in that it's a test of long-term stability and viability, of keeping

fighters and keeping them happy, of being able to make matches and, of course, being able to make money.

This much is certain, however: The musician born Curtis Jackson III won't be changing his name to "$59.95 on pay-per-view, $69.95 for high-definition," and TMT Promotions won't be signing perpetual bridesmaid Rocky Juarez in an attempt to get him more shots than 50 Cent famously sustained more than a decade ago.

***

The most important thing, of course, is to give fans reasons to tune in or show up. At times, that seems to be less a concern to promoters these days, and not because they're doing a good job. They're not.

The fights we want are few and far between. The fights that produce fireworks are increasingly rare. And on the individual level, most boxers aren't marketed well at all and will likely end up throwing more punches over the course of 12 rounds than the number of tickets their presence brought to the card.

Even the many who can sell tickets don't sell that much. Nonito Donaire and Robert Guerrero each recently headlined cards that reportedly had fewer than 3,000 paying customers. Amir Khan and Victor Ortiz were in main events of cards that had fewer than 3,500. And Guerrero-Aydin, Khan-Garcia, Ortiz-Lopez and Tarver-Kayode all had more tickets given away than sold.

That's the bad news. The good news is there are promoters and networks experimenting with strategies that the UFC has used successfully. More undercard bouts are being featured on television and online, for example. And Golden Boy took a page straight out of the Dana White playbook when it announced that the best knockout on its Sept. 15 card would net someone a $100,000 bonus.

A hundred thousand dollars for a knockout? It's a shame that this isn't an Andrew Golota fight or a UFC card, because then we could've also had a shoo-in for "submission of the night." ■

Oscar De La Hoya mimicked the **UFC's Dana White** when he offered $100,000 to the man who scores the best knockout on Sept. 15. Image: **Ethan Miller-Getty Images**

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JABS & STRAIGHT WRITES

By **Thomas Hauser**

BEST MOMENT IN SPORTS ... OUTSIDE OF BOXING

MAX KELLERMAN

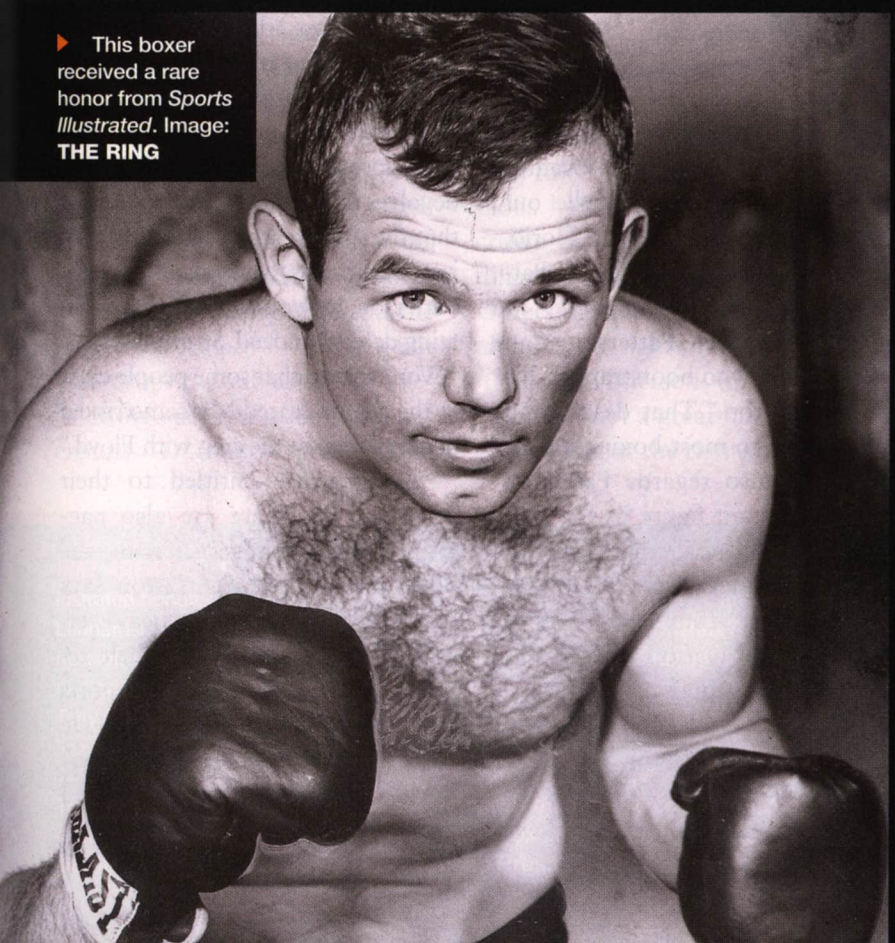
About 12 years ago, I was one of a bunch of guys from ESPN radio who played a team of former Major League Baseball players in a minor league park in Connecticut. Brooks Robinson was our manager. I was playing left field. Ferguson Jenkins was pitching for the real players. He was just lobbing it in. Brian Kenny led off for us with a single. The next guy made an out, and I came up.

First pitch ... I swung and missed. In fact, I swung so hard that I did a pinwheel. Jenkins looked at me and asked, "Did you try to take me deep?" I said, "No, sir," which, of course, I had.

Next pitch ... a slow pitch down the middle. And I whacked it. I mean, I really got a hold of it. You know when you've smashed one. I'm thinking, "Line drive, deep in the gap, extra bases." It was as hard as I could hit a baseball. I'll remember that feeling until the day I die. And then George Foster, who was playing left field and was about a hundred years old, casually jogged over and caught it like a routine fly ball, which is all it was.

Later in the game, Pat Tabler hit a fly ball over my head. I went back for it and ran face-first into the wall. That was a three-run homer. And in my only other at bat that day, Rick Honeycut pitched to me like he was pitching batting practice and got me out on a pop up.

Max Kellerman might want to stick with interviewing. Image: **Ed Mulholland**



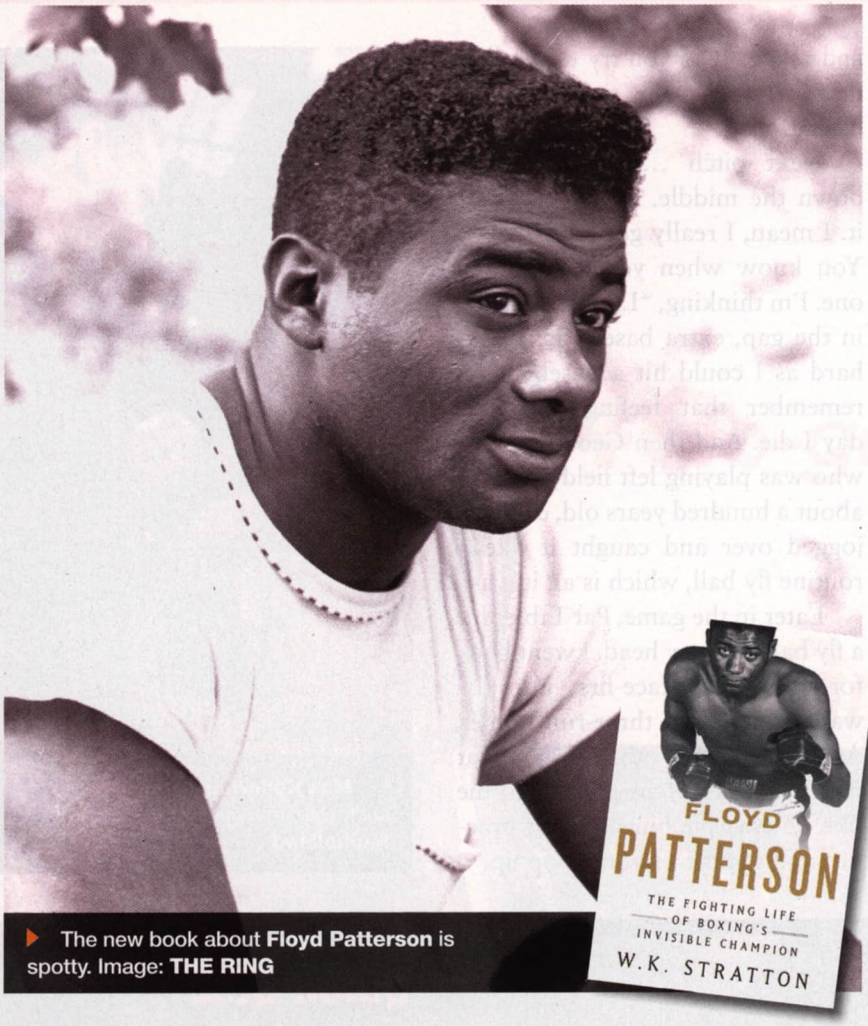
This boxer received a rare honor from *Sports Illustrated*. Image: **THE RING**

QUICK QUIZ

1. Who was the first recognized world champion who was born in the United States?

2. Only three boxers have been honored by *Sports Illustrated* as the magazine's "Sportsman of the Year." Who were they?

3. Who was the first woman to judge a heavyweight championship fight?



The new book about **Floyd Patterson** is spotty. Image: **THE RING**

PATTERSON BIO: HIT AND MISS

There are no first-rate biographies of Floyd Patterson. *Floyd Patterson: The Fighting Life of Boxing's Invisible Champion* by W.K. Stratton (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) tries to fill that void, succeeding in some ways but falling short in others.

The outlines of Patterson's story are known to older fans. At age 10, after an early childhood filled with self-flagellation, petty crime and school truancy, he was sent to the Wiltwyck School for Boys in upstate New York. From there, he segued into boxing. Cus D'Amato oversaw his early development in tandem with Frank Lavelle (an amateur trainer who began the process of molding the young fighter). Eventually, D'Amato pushed Lavelle out and replaced him with Dan Florio. D'Amato was jettisoned during Patterson's championship reign.

Stratton calls Patterson "an overachiever who bootstrapped his way to the top." That description could apply to most boxing champions. He also regards Patterson as an important figure in the civil rights movement because of his support for integration in the face of opposition from racist whites and, later, the Nation of Islam as personified by Muhammad Ali.

Stratton's book benefits from some good research on the early stages of Patterson's life and his amateur years. The writing flows nicely and there are some poignant scenes, such as Patterson visiting Sonny Liston in the latter's dressing room after Liston was knocked out in the first round by Ali in Lewiston, Maine. But *Floyd Patterson: Boxing's Invisible Champion* is wanting in several respects.

Patterson won a vacant title by beating 40-year-old Archie Moore after Rocky Marciano retired. He defended it against a series of nonentities (losing to Ingemar Johansson, then besting him in a rematch). He avoided credible challengers like Cleveland Williams and Zora Folley, and was dropped like a bowling ball by Sonny Liston in their two encounters. Later in his career, he was knocked out twice by Muhammad Ali.

In the face of this historical record, Stratton writes hyperbolically that Patterson had "a left hook as powerful as any ever seen in boxing" and that "no one had ever seen faster hands." He calls the Patterson-Johansson trilogy "one of the most celebrated rivalries boxing has known" and Patterson-Liston I "the most talked-about heavyweight title bout since Louis-Schmeling." He also devolves into fantasy with the claim that the "real reason" Rocky Marciano retired was fear that, if he fought Patterson, he would "suffer a humiliating defeat." Indeed, Stratton writes, "Word spread that some people close to the champ feared Marciano risked getting killed in the ring with Floyd."

Authors are entitled to their opinions, but there are also nagging factual inaccuracies in the book. At one point, Stratton says that Johansson was a "heavy favorite" over Patterson in their rematch. Two pages later, he reports that the odds were 8-to-5. He writes that a decision by the New York State Supreme Court paved the way for Ali to return to the ring

in the Empire State against Oscar Bonavena and Joe Frazier after his exile from boxing. In truth, it was a decision by a federal court (the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York) that opened the door.

Presenting an idealized version of Patterson, Stratton recounts how, prior to fighting Chester Mieszala in Mieszala's hometown of Chicago, he refused to train in the same gym as his opponent because "Floyd feared he might inadvertantly pick up some tips by watching Mieszala that would give him an unfair advantage in the fight."

Isn't it more likely that Patterson (and D'Amato) feared Mieszala's camp would learn by watching him?

As for D'Amato, Stratton opens doors that might lead to a thorough exploration of his life but doesn't walk through them.

The book raises questions regarding D'Amato's relationship with several mob figures at the same time he was self-righteously feuding with James Norris and Frankie Carbo. But it doesn't answer them. It follows Patterson's tumultuous relationship with D'Amato to the end of Cus's life, but never mentions Mike Tyson.

And the book touches on the issue of D'Amato's sexuality but then drops the subject.

More specifically, Stratton references "D'Amato's peculiar behavior," including the fact that he sometimes slept in the same bed as Patterson. He then quotes author Gay Talese as saying, "I remember a story that Patterson told me. I got the impression that D'Amato had a sexual thing for Patterson. Patterson told me he was lying in bed and D'Amato was lying next to him. This one time in bed, D'Amato had his foot on Patterson's foot, sort of playing with his toes."

Also, Stratton references Patterson's tenure as chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission and the dementia that had begun to creep into his life by then. He ignores the fact that Patterson was already mentally impaired at the time of his appointment and that putting him in the job was a cynical ploy by New York governor George Pataki and senator Alfonse D'Amato to use the former champion as cover for a scheme that turned the commission into a cesspool of political patronage, incompetence, and corruption.

Floyd Patterson reigned at a time when the heavyweight championship was the most coveted title in sports. Some champions have added stature to the crown by virtue of their extraordinary ring skills and persona. Others were less gifted and came along at the right time.

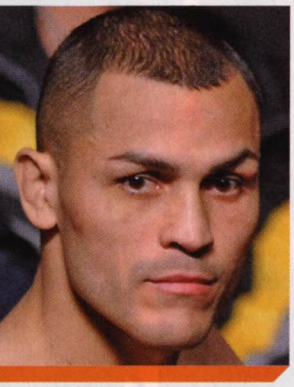
Floyd Patterson was a good fighter — not a great one — who came along at the right time. ■

QUIZ ANSWERS: **1.** John L. Sullivan, who was born in Boston in 1858. **2.** Sports Illustrated honored Ingemar Johansson in 1959, Muhammad Ali in 1974, and Sugar Ray Leonard in 1981. **3.** Eva Shain, who was assigned by the New York State Athletic Commission as a judge for Muhammad Ali vs. Earnie Shavers at Madison Square Garden on September 29, 1977. New York had a rounds scoring system at the time. Shain and Tony Castellano scored the bout 9-6 for Ali. Referee Johnny LoBianco had it 9-5-1.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book (*Winks and Daggers: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

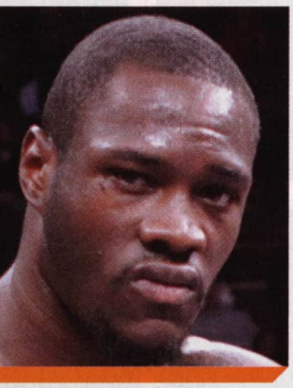
FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT



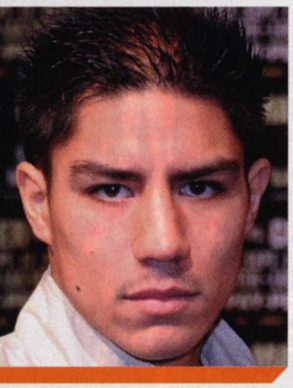
MIKE ALVARADO

MUSIC: Any R&B and hip-hop. I usually go into the ring after searching through music. Whatever helps me to get hyped for the fight and to keep my head on mentally.
CAR: I'm going to go for an Escalade.
FAVORITE FOOD: Pasta, Italian.
TATTOOS: Mile-High is written right above my 303 tattoo that I have on my chest. Alvarado is on my right shoulder, and I have a lion on my back.
ATHLETE (OUTSIDE BOXING): Right now, it's Peyton Manning since he's with the Denver Broncos, my favorite team.
MOVIE: *Scarface.*
VIDEO GAME: *Mike Tyson's Punch-Out.*



DEONTAY WILDER

MUSIC: R&B, R. Kelly.
CAR: Drop-top Phantom or Rolls Royce, but I drive a fully-loaded Chevrolet Suburban.
FOOD: Pizza, with sausage and pepperoni.
TATOOS: I don't know how many I have. I just know it's a lot.
ATHLETE (OUTSIDE BOXING): Lebron James.
MOVIE: *300.*
VIDEO GAME: I rarely play video games.



JESSIE VARGAS

MUSIC: Lil Wayne, Tiga, Spanish music. In my entrance to the ring, I come out with mariachi,
CAR: I drive a BMW 5 Series. Future cars that I would like to own are BMW 7 Series and Range Rover.
FOOD: I love Mexican food.
TATTOOS: I do not have tattoos and don't want any.
BOXER: Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. and Sugar Ray Leonard.
MOVIE: Would have to be *Tombstone*, the reason being I like the story behind it and what the characters represent.
VIDEO GAME: I don't really play video games, but if I do, I prefer soccer and football games.

VICENTE ESCOBEDO

MUSIC: I would have to say Morris Day and The Time, Prince. Definitely gets me going and puts a smile on my face. I like all kinds of music, hip-hop, old school.
CAR: My favorite is a Ferrari. I drive a Lexus 250 IS.
FOOD: My favorite food is definitely Thai food. Japanese food.
TATTOO: I have no tattoos. Thought about it when I was 18. Now, I think about what kind of example I would set for my daughter. Don't think I'll get one.
ATHLETE (OUTSIDE BOXING): Jerry Rice, Joe Montana. In the sport, Oscar De La Hoya
MOVIE: *The Bronx Tale.* I like those mafia movies. *Casino. Good Fellas.* If it's a comedy, then it would be *The Wedding Crashers.*
VIDEO GAME: I've never been much into video games. It might be *Grand Theft Auto.*

Images: Tom Hogan, Ethan Miller, Getty Images, Fightwire

GOOD, BAD, WORSE

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

By: **Michael Rosenthal**

GOOD

Images: Scott Heavey-Getty Images

A lot of good came out of women's boxing in the Olympics. First, the women made their long-overdue debut in the London Games. That alone was reason to celebrate. Second, by all accounts, the women's competition brought considerable excitement to the boxing venue. The noise level generated when Katie Taylor of Ireland fought reportedly was the highest of the Games. And, third, Claressa Shields (gold) and Marlen Esparza (pictured with bronze) were the only Americans to leave with medals. Overall, the women couldn't have made a bigger splash in their Olympic debut. If this doesn't kick start women's professional boxing, nothing will.

BAD

The latest talk that Floyd Mayweather Jr. might fight Manny Pacquiao next year should be good news. After all, we've been clamoring for the showdown for years. The bad part is that it's difficult to get excited about it any longer. Mayweather and Pacquiao can still fight but recent performances would seem to indicate they've begun to decline, meaning we wouldn't see them at their best. It reminds me of the 1989 rematch between Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns, a big fight that lost much of its luster because it happened too late. Leonard and Hearns were 33 and 30, respectively. Mayweather and Pacquiao would be 36 and 33. Sad.

WORSE

I don't know what was worse: the performance of the U.S. men in the London Games or the officials and system of scoring used in the boxing competition. The Americans failed to win a medal for the first time, an embarrassment for a country that once ruled Olympic boxing. The USOC announced that it plans to make serious changes. Duh. I don't want to disparage all the boxing officials but some were disgraceful. And AIBA, which runs amateur boxing, is suspect in part because it is getting involved in pro boxing. The good news is that the horrible computer scoring system, an utter disaster from the beginning, is finally dead. We can only hope corrupt or incompetent judges don't screw up in 2016. Fingers crossed.

10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

THIS MONTH: Best two heavyweights from the same family in boxing history.

1. VITALI AND WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
(102-5-0, 91 KOs): Brothers

2. MAX AND BUDDY BAER
(120-20-0, 98 KOs): Brothers

3. LEON AND MICHAEL SPINKS
(57-18-3, 35 KOs): Brothers

4. JOE AND MARVIS FRAZIER
(51-6-1, 35 KOs): Father, son

5. BUSTER MATHIS AND BUSTER JR.
(51-6, 28 KOs): Father, son

6. MUHAMMAD AND RAHMAN ALI
(70-8-1, 44 KOs): Brothers

7. TONY AND NATE TUBBS
(65-14-0, 39 KOs): Brothers

8. JACK AND BRIAN LONDON
(132-60-6, 78 KOs): Father, son

9. JERRY AND BOBBY QUARRY
(62-21-6, 38 KOs): Brothers

10. TOM AND PETER McNEELEY
(84-21-0, 64 KOs): Father, son

NOTE: Combined records are for all weights at which the two boxers fought.

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS.
THIS MONTH: WHO IS THE BEST AMERICAN HEAVYWEIGHT PROSPECT?

THE PERCENTAGES:

Seth Mitchell	46.7
Deontay Wilder	26.8
Other	11.1
Bryant Jennings	7.7
Johnathon Banks	3.1
Tor Hamer	2.7
Joe Hanks	1.9

NOTE: 2,354 readers voted in the poll.

Glen Johnson said **Chad Dawson** (left) is the best boxer he ever faced. Image: **Scott Foster**

GLEN JOHNSON

By **Lem Satterfield**

Glen Johnson lost most of his biggest fights. That includes setbacks against Bernard Hopkins, Antonio Tarver, Chad Dawson, Carl Froch and Lucian Bute, as well as several other marquee opponents.

And he failed in his first three attempts to win a major title before outpointing Clinton Woods to win the IBF light heavyweight belt in 2004. That preceded his greatest moment in boxing — a one-punch, ninth-round knockout of Roy Jones Jr. in his next outing, making Johnson an elite fighter.

Johnson (51-17-2, 35 KOs) soon vacated the title and would never again wear a major belt. And no one seemed to care. "The Road Warrior" was appreciated because of the fire with which he fought, the fact that he faced the best fighters at his weight — sometimes more than once and often on the opponent's turf — and the grace with which he carried himself outside the ring.

Johnson, 43, retired after he lost a unanimous decision to prospect Andrew Fonfara on July 14 in Chicago.

THE RING caught up to Johnson for a list of his premiere opponents over 10 categories:

BEST OVERALL: BERNARD HOPKINS

On that, I think that I would go with Bernard Hopkins. I think that Chad Dawson was a good boxer and has a lot of skills and talent. But I don't think that in Hopkins' prime, and with his mind-set, (that

Glen Johnson admired **Roy Jones Jr.'s** hand speed even though his chin didn't hold up. Image: **Elsa-Getty Images**

Dawson was) as mature as Bernard Hopkins to do what he needed to do to beat you. In his prime, I don't think Chad Dawson would have beaten Bernard Hopkins. Not at all.

BEST BOXER: CHAD DAWSON

The most complete boxer was probably Chad Dawson. I just think that he was able to move around the ring very well. I think that he's a solid guy who was able to throw combinations off of his movement. I would go with him in that category.

BEST JAB: DAWSON

Probably Chad Dawson. He punches out of the southpaw stance with a good jab. He uses it well and it's pretty strong. I have a lot of respect for his jab.

BEST DEFENSE: HOPKINS

He was very hard to hit. I hardly got a chance to put hands on him when we fought, and, even afterwards, when we sparred.

BEST CHIN: CARL FROCH

I would say that because I think that I hit him flush and clean without any interruption and with no block on the punch. No nothing. It was clean on the chin. Boom! But he didn't go anywhere. I've hit other people with the same shot, and I got a reaction or something. Either I hurt them or you could see that they were rocked. But I hit him flush and … his reaction was the same as if he had gotten hit with any other punch I had thrown. He wasn't hurt, at least not visibly anyway.

BEST PUNCHER: TAVORIS CLOUD

That goes to Cloud. I just think that he was the best puncher. He was able to get good leverage on his punches, and I just think that he hit me the hardest.

FASTEST FEET: HOPKINS

I would have to … say Bernard, because he was always just an inch or two from where I thought that he was going to be. He was always able to dictate the space between he and I when we fought.

FASTEST HANDS: ROY JONES JR.

Fastest hands would be Roy Jones. Roy Jones could move his hands from point "A" to point "B" quicker than anybody I've been in the ring with. He just doesn't throw a lot of combinations. He would throw one or two shots, but he would throw those one or two shots very fast. From where I saw when I was attacking him and between when he reacted and moved his punches and got his punches off, that was faster than anybody I've ever fought.

SMARTEST: HOPKINS

That's Bernard again. He just always knows what he's doing, and he's always in tune with what he's doing more than anybody else. Bernard just always seems like he has a better understanding of what he needed to do and exactly when he needed to do it. So I just think that he was the smartest of all of the guys that I fought.

STRONGEST: CLOUD

That would have to be Cloud. That's the strongest guy. I think that he's physically strong, and his punches are strong as well. ■

AIR-RAISING EXPERIENCE

THOSE WHO TRAIN AT HIGH ALTITUDE CONTINUE TO EXTOLL ITS VIRTUES

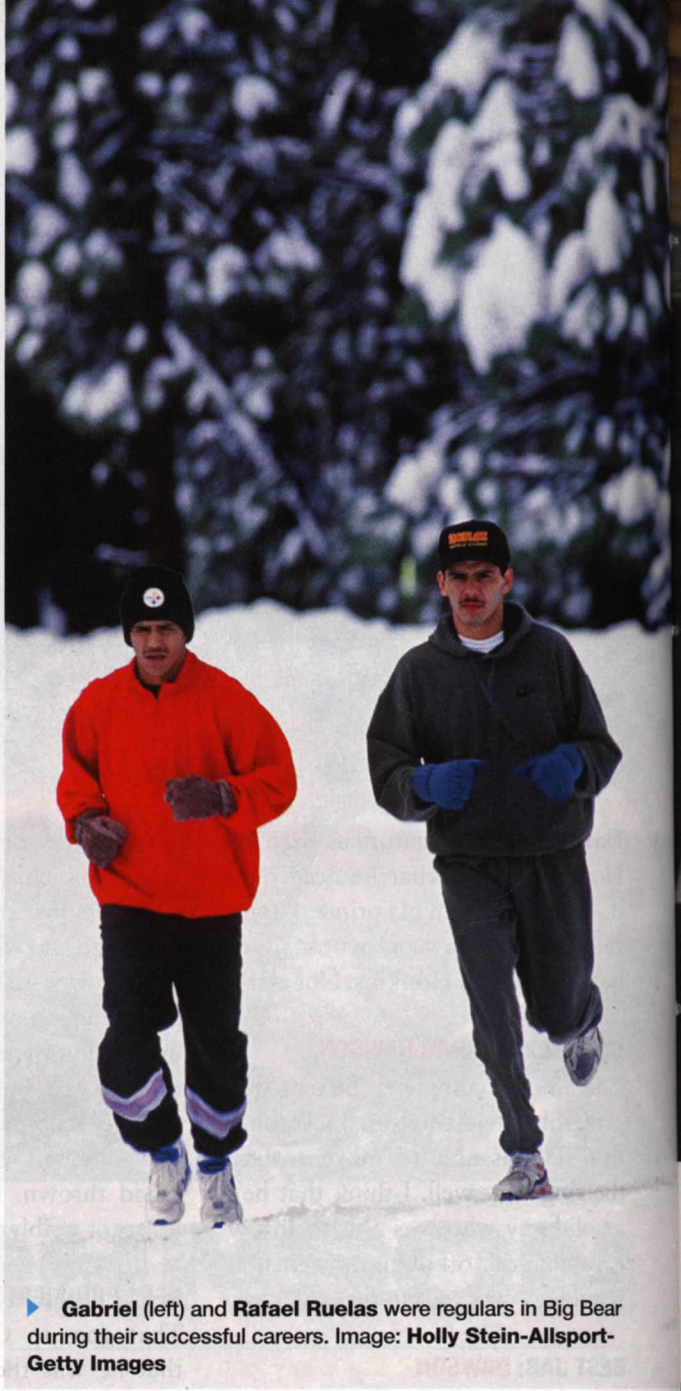
By **T.K. Stewart**

In Oscar De La Hoya's heyday, the small city of Big Bear Lake, Calif., became synonymous with boxing. The "Golden Boy" was one of the first to make the trek to the mountains of the San Bernardino National Forest for the purported benefits of training at altitude, and others soon followed. Shane Mosley and Fernando Vargas purchased property and established their training camps at elevations nearly 7,000 feet above sea level. In the ensuing years, fighters from the world over ascended the winding road to seek their own advantages in the serenity of Big Bear.

Boxers, like other endurance athletes such as runners and cyclists, discovered that training well above sea level for a month or more before a bout caused their bodies to naturally create additional red blood cells to compensate for the lower concentration of oxygen in the mountain air. The extra red blood cells benefited them by shuttling more oxygen to fuel muscles, allowing them to boost endurance. It is this simple physiological change that draws fighters to the hills.

"I always liked training in Big Bear, it was good for the breathing," said Shane Mosley, who trained at high elevation for more than a decade. While Mosley didn't explain the science of altitude training, he simply stated: "I always felt better training up there. It does help your wind, and the thing is if you can train up there, it gives you confidence that you can fight harder once you go back down."

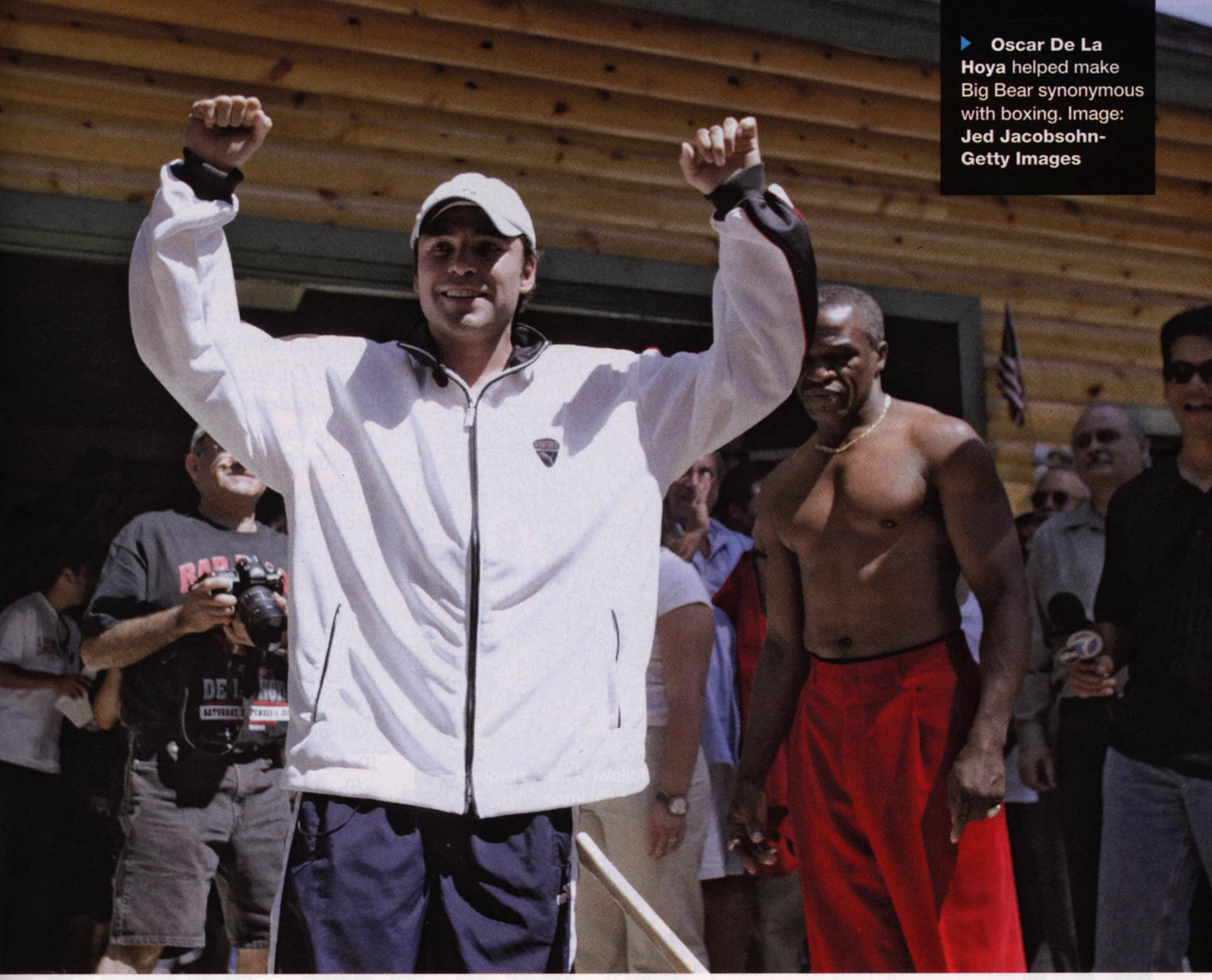
Mosley's trainer, Naazim Richardson, is neither for nor against training in the mountains. "It worked for Shane," he said. "I don't know what it did, but it was peaceful up there, it was quiet and there weren't a lot of distractions, so that right there alone was enough. I think it helped with his confidence because it is harder to breathe in Big Bear, so if you can do 12 rounds of sparring there, when you go back to normal air, it gives you the confidence you can go the limit."



Gabriel (left) and **Rafael Ruelas** were regulars in Big Bear during their successful careers. Image: **Holly Stein-Allsport-Getty Images**

Most of the top pugilists in the world today now do some of their training several thousand feet above sea level. Manny Pacquiao often begins preparing in Baguio City, Philippines, while David Haye, Amir Khan and Carl Froch often train on the Canary Island of Tenerife off the coast of Spain, where Mount Teide offers the highest peak in all of Europe at over 12,000 feet.

There have been no published studies specific to boxing regarding high-altitude training. While some



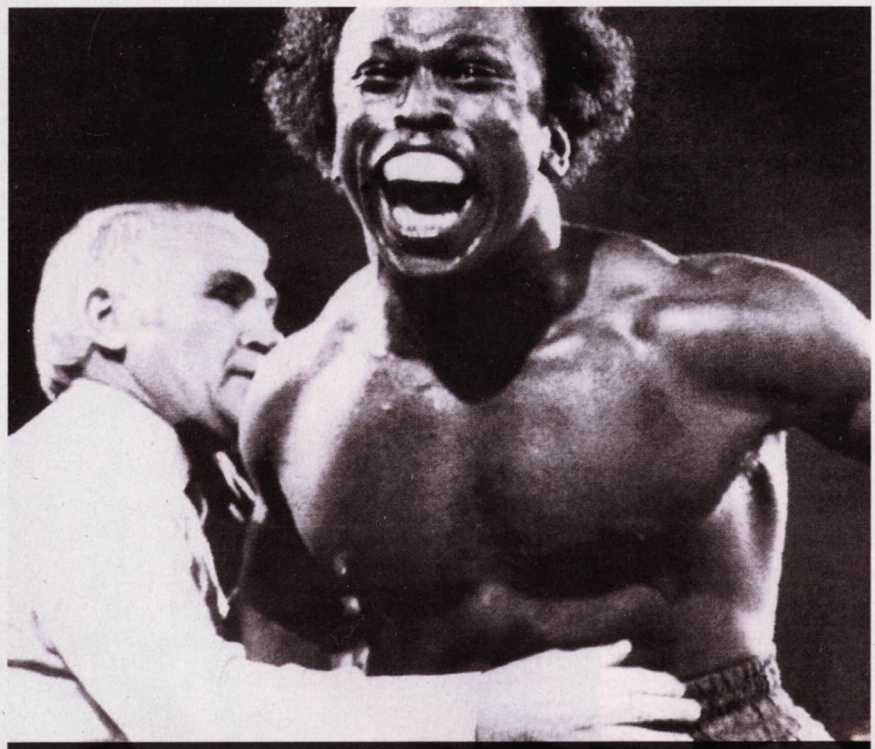
Oscar De La Hoya helped make Big Bear synonymous with boxing. Image: **Jed Jacobsohn-Getty Images**

old school proponents question the benefits of training in the mountains, the proof seems to be in the results. Obviously fighters such as De La Hoya, Mosley and Vargas have a track record that points to outstanding results whereas Pacquiao, Haye, Khan and Froch are all among the top fighters in the world today.

The initial line of thinking was that the athlete should live and train at high altitude. However, the evidence now suggests that athletes seeking to gain full advantage should "live high and train low" — in other words, live at elevation but train at or near sea level. The strategy here is that athletes obtain the advantage of living and breathing the thin air at higher elevation and then can train more intensely at or near sea level, thus boosting performance.

Conversely, training at high altitude has inherent risks. If proper adjustments aren't made in an athlete's nutrition, the increased metabolic rate associated with high-altitude training can lead to a loss of muscle mass. The low-oxygen environment stresses the body, which may lead to decreased immune functions or an increase in the hormone cortisol, which has a range of adverse effects. Dehydration is also an issue. Not to mention altitude sickness, which can cause headaches, nausea, confusion and other symptoms at relatively modest altitudes, and above 8,000 feet can lead to very serious conditions in some cases, with the risk increasing the higher one goes.

While the scientific community is still debating the pros and cons of altitude training, it's the fighters and trainers who seem convinced that the benefits are real and significant. Trainer Abel Sanchez owns and operates The Summit gym in Big Bear. He has been a proponent of altitude training since 1996, when he trained Miguel Angel Gonzalez to face De La Hoya. "The altitude helps the fighters because it makes the training much more difficult, which helps them in the fight, but so does the solitude," Sanchez said. "There's no distractions up here for them, so it works well." ■



The greatest moment in the career of **Michael Dokes** followed his first-round knockout of **Mike Weaver**, which gave him the heavyweight title. Image: THE RING

POWDER KEG

By **Brian Harty**

Photos of Michael Dokes from the early 1980s show a man of the times. He had a look that doesn't exist much anymore, a holdover from the Pittsburgh "Steel Curtain" days when pro athletes projected auras of barely-maintained sanity and utter contempt for barbers. In his nightlife, too, Dokes was a picture of 80s excess: fur coats, mirror-frame sunglasses, crisp fedoras, and an omnivorous smile.

Dokes died of liver cancer on Aug. 12, two days after his 54th birthday. What the old photos don't show is the talent that went with him, or the promising career that was marred by addiction and crime.

Dokes was born in 1958 in Akron, Ohio, and by age 16 was a national amateur heavyweight champion. At the 1975 Pan American Games, still only 17 years old, he lost a close decision to Cuban legend Teofilo Stevenson in the final. The following year he turned professional.

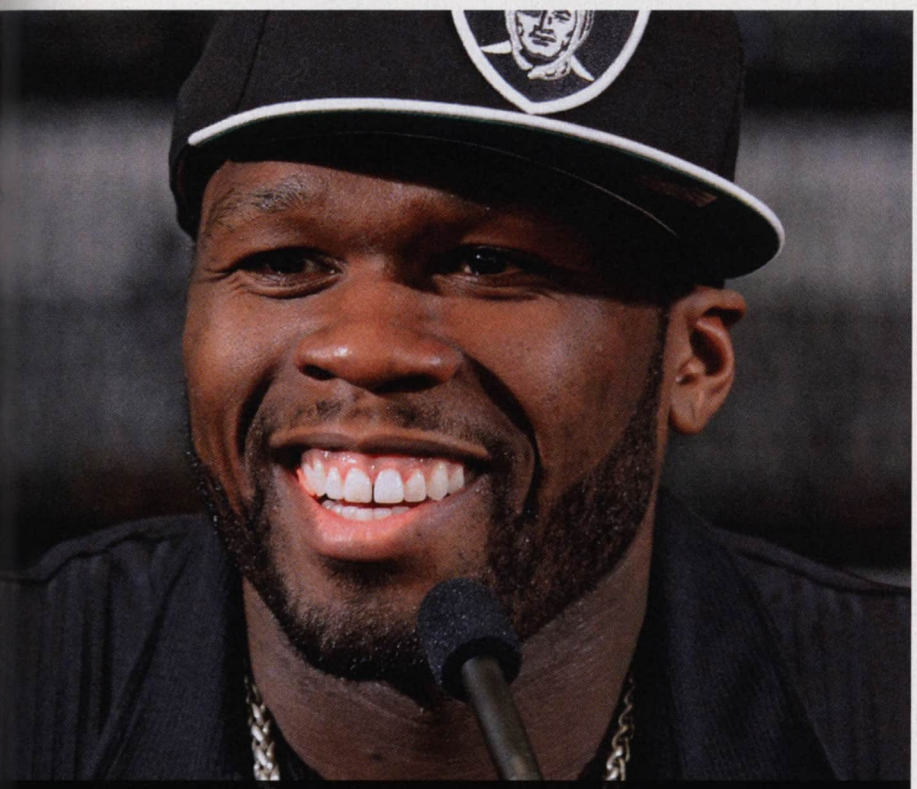
As a pro, Dokes and his whirlwind style went undefeated for six years before this three-fight sequence in 1982-83: He won the WBA title from Mike Weaver by a widely-criticized quick stoppage in Round 1 (prompting THE RING to put Dokes on its cover with the headline TAINTED CHAMPION?), fought Weaver again to a 15-round draw and then got knocked out by South African underdog Gerrie Coetzee in 10 rounds. That would've earned him the label "exposed" in today's world.

There was no doubt, however, that Dokes' battle with Evander Holyfield in 1989 was one for the ages. They went at it in Caesars Palace for 10 rounds, Rocky-style, before Holyfield straightened Dokes' legs with a left hook-uppercut hybrid and then finished him on the ropes. Online obituaries for Dokes were underscored by commenters saying the fight made them lifetime boxing fans. THE RING called it the Heavyweight Fight of the Decade. Holyfield himself said Dokes was the best boxer with the fastest hands he ever faced.

But the decline had already begun. In a fourth-round KO loss to Razor Ruddock in 1990, Dokes didn't so much fall as crumble from a lack of consciousness. Against Riddick Bowe in 1993, commentator Jim Lampley offhandedly referred to the combatants as "the two dirigibles." Dokes was knocked out in the first round. He finished his career in 1997 with a record of 53-6-2 (34 knockouts).

Dokes didn't hide his appetites; he professed his love for food, booze and cocaine on many occasions. The man nicknamed "Dynamite" wasn't all good times, though; he had a dark side unfathomable to outsiders. In 1986 it reportedly took five officers to subdue Dokes when he was arrested for drug trafficking. In 1998 he beat his girlfriend so horribly that he was charged with attempted murder. He pleaded guilty and got 10 years.

It was a life of inexplicable detours. Wearing those same old sunglasses at his sentencing, Dokes himself probably best summed up the path that had brought him to that moment: "There's no excuse for my actions." ■



Rapper **50 Cent** brings star power to the business of boxing promotions.
Image: **Ethan Miller-Getty Images**

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

By **Brian Harty**

Rapper **50 Cent** (known to his family as **Curtis Jackson**) announced in July the formation of a promotional company called TMT (The Money Team) with his friend **Floyd Mayweather Jr.** It was immediately clear that the venture has more than just Jackson's fortune behind it. It has a growing stable — already top-tier fighters like **Andre Berto, Zab Judah** and **Billy Dib** have signed on, with other big-name stars possibly to come. It also has Jackson's circle of famous friends to entice TV cameras. Most importantly, it has Floyd. Some, including **Manny Pacquiao's** promoter, **Bob Arum,** have speculated that TMT's presence could be the long-awaited catalyst for boxing's most coveted faceoff. ...

Mayweather himself was released from jail on Aug. 3, looking a little different as a result of weight loss and hair gain. His representatives were scheduled to be back in court for a hearing on Aug. 21, this time in pursuit of $61.6 million that Floyd says a bankrupt Alabama casino owes him for a loan made a couple years ago. ...

Promoter **Joe DeGuardia,** president of Star Boxing, was hit head-on by a car driving the wrong way with no headlights on the Long Island Expressway on July 29. The driver of the other vehicle was killed and his passenger critically injured. DeGuardia miraculously sustained only minor injuries. ...

Former junior featherweight titleholder **Wilfredo Vazquez Jr.** was charged in a three-way assault at a mall in Puerto Rico. According to the newspaper *El Nuevo Dia*, Vazquez claimed that a man and woman dogpiled him after a petty dispute and he pushed them off, but said, "I am incapable of hitting a woman or a kid because I'm Papito Vazquez." It remains to be seen whether that defense holds up in court. ...

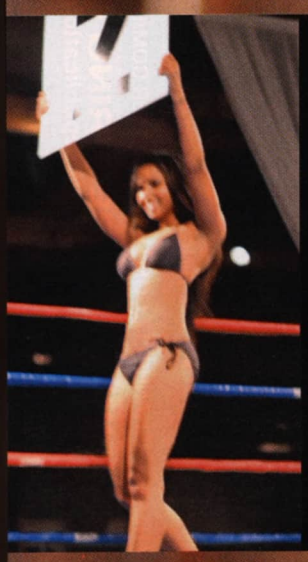
Female WBC flyweight titleholder **Mariana "Barbie" Juarez** was featured in *Playboy Mexico's* August issue wearing the sloppiest hand wraps ever seen. Terrible worksmanship. Not sure what sort of boxing fan this is supposed to appeal to. ...

Speaking of flashers, **Nonito Donaire** bared his soul for the camera in his film acting debut as ... a boxer! The movie, called *Palad Ta Ang Nagbuot (Fate Will Decide)*, is actually a remake of a 1969 Visayan film starring Filipino junior lightweight legend **Gabriel Elorde,** also known as "Flash." ...

Paul Williams found himself at the center of a fight for his presence on the night of Sept. 15. He received ringside invitations from both **Saul Alvarez** (whom Williams was preparing to face when he suffered a paralyzing motorcycle accident) and **Sergio Martinez** (whom Williams did face on two occasions). In the end, he accepted Alvarez's offer because it came first, but expressed his gratitude to Martinez for the gesture. Helluva way to no longer be the most avoided man in boxing. ■

BY HEATHER SHANHOLTZ

SIERRA RENE



HEIGHT: 5-foot-7
WEIGHT: 123 pounds
MEASUREMENTS: 32-26-37
STANCE: Orthodox
REACH: 24 inches
CURRENT LOCATION: Cleveland, Ohio
WHERE YOU'VE SEEN HER: Ultimate MMA Magazine, International Planet Beach Cover Model
BOOKING INFO:
thesierrarene@gmail.com

Image: **Dave Alan**

RING **CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH**

SIERRA RENE

Image: **Dave Alan**

THE RING CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH BY: **HEATHER SHANHOLTZ**

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DO YOU WANT TO BE A RING CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH?

submit photos and bio to **ringcardgirl@sepublications.com**

Image: **Dave Alan**

The fact **Robert Guerrero** had to overcome a number of obstacles made his victory over **Selcuk Aydin** particularly sweet. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH:

ROBERT GUERRERO

By **Michael Rosenthal**

No one was shocked when Robert Guerrero outpointed Selcuk Aydin on July 28 in San Jose even if the Turk was somewhat of a mystery. Guerrero, a two-division titleholder, was supposed to win.

The totality of what Guerrero had to overcome recently to have his hand raised is what was impressive. He hadn't fought in more than a year. He was fighting for the first time with a surgically-repaired shoulder. And, perhaps most significantly, he was moving up two weight classes in hopes of landing a big-money fight.

Guerrero's ability to overcome all that — as well as a physically strong, competent opponent — added significance to his convincing unanimous-decision victory and enhanced his credibility.

"I felt great at welterweight," said Guerrero, who won the vacant WBC interim belt. "I wanted to fight the best. That's why I fought Selcuk. Nobody wanted to fight him in this division but I came in and took care of business.

"I believed in my talent, and I boxed and used my skills."

Guerrero (30-1-1, 18 knockouts) is lobbying to be Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s next opponent, which would earn him by far the biggest payday of his career. The problem is that everyone wants to fight Mayweather.

At least Guerrero can present a more-compelling case for himself after his performance against Aydin. ■

POUND FOR POUND:
No change.

HEAVYWEIGHTS:
No change.

CRUISERWEIGHTS:
No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS:
No change.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS:
No change.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS:
No change.

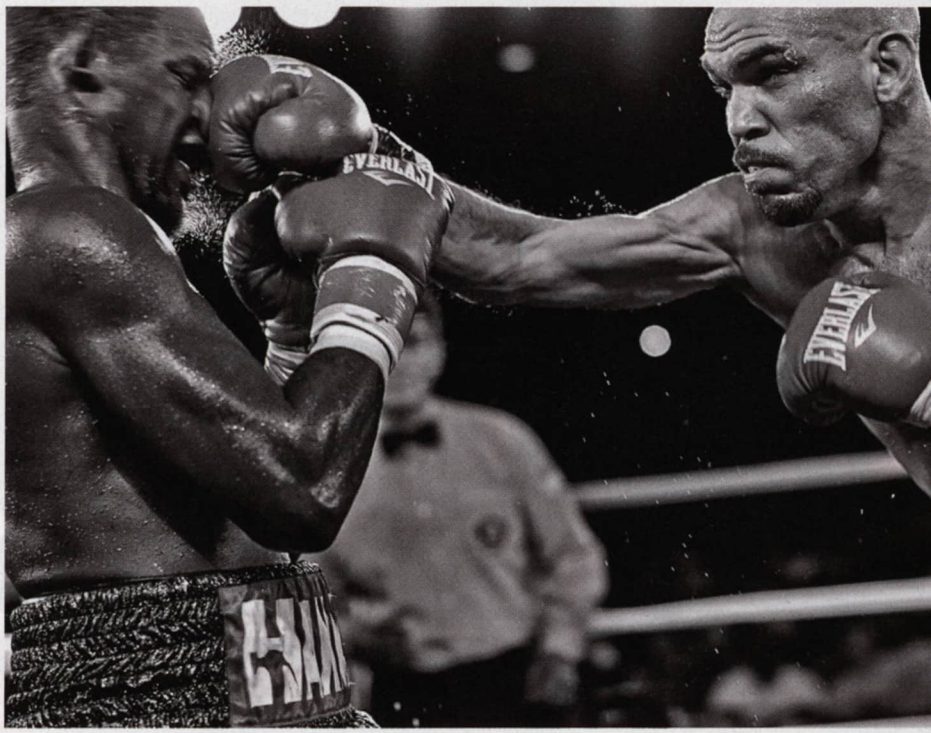
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS:
No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS:
Robert Guerrero's first fight at welterweight, a unanimous-decision win over then-undefeated Selcuk Aydin (No. 10 at the time), also won him the bottom spot in the ratings.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS:
Marcos Maidana (No. 6 last month) left the 140-pound list after moving up in weight. Everyone from Erik Morales down to Ajose Olusegun moved up a notch, while Mexican Pablo Cesar Cano took the vacancy at No. 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS:
Hard-luck trooper Raymundo Beltran (unrated) stunned Hank Lundy (No. 8 at the time) with a 10-round majority decision, thus knocking Lundy from the ratings and claiming a spot for himself at No. 10.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS:
As promised (and demonstrated) before his win over unrated Vicente Escobedo, Adrien Broner (No. 3 last month) moved up to lightweight, thus lifting Takahiro Ao (No. 4 last month) and everyone else below up a level. Bryan Vasquez, of Costa Rica, grabbed the No. 10 slot.



▶ **Raymundo Beltran** (right) entered the lightweight ratings after his stunning and hard-fought upset of **Hank Lundy**. Image: **Tri Nguyen**

FEATHERWEIGHTS:
No change.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS:
No change.

BANTAMWEIGHTS:
Vic Darchinyan (No. 8 last month) decided to put on some weight and left the ratings, pulling Jorge Arce and Hugo Ruiz (Nos. 9 and 10 last month) up one space and creating room for A.J. Banal, of the Philippines, at No. 10.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS:
Hugo Cazares (No. 4 last month) scored a unanimous decision over Daniel Diaz (unrated), but did so at a higher weight. Having not fought at 115 for a year, he left the ratings. Nos. 5 through 10 gained a spot, and lossless Japanese fighter Ryo Akaho stepped in at No. 10 after knocking out countryman Yohei Tobe (unrated) in eight rounds.

FLYWEIGHTS:
Edgar Sosa (No. 10 at the time) stopped Shigetaka Ikehara (unrated), who, at 22-4 (18 KOs) either loses or wins by knockout, and switched places with Luis Concepcion (No. 9 last month) in the ratings.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS:
Luis Ceja (No. 9 at the time) lost a decision to unrated Ivan Meneses in Mexico and fell from the ratings, elevating Ryoichi Taguchi (No. 10 last month) into the vacancy and ushering Peruvian Alberto Rossel into the No. 10 position.

STRAWWEIGHTS:
Juan Palacios (No. 7 last month) left the 105-pound ratings for heavier opponents. As a result, everyone below moved up a notch and undefeated Thai fighter Paipharob Kokietgym debuted at No. 10. ■

George Groves, No. 6 at super middleweight, made a strong statement in his first important fight in the U.S. by stopping **Francisco Sierra**. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

SCAN THIS QR CODE FOR UPDATED RATINGS AT RINGTV.COM.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C	**WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**	Ukraine | 58-3-0 (51 KOs)
1.	**VITALI KLITSCHKO**	Ukraine | 44-2-0 (40 KOs)
2.	**ALEXANDER POVETKIN**	Russia | 24-0-0 (16 KOs)
3.	**TOMASZ ADAMEK**	Poland | 46-2-0 (28 KOs)
4.	**DAVID HAYE**	UK | 26-2-0 (24 KOs)
5.	**KUBRAT PULEV**	Bulgaria | 16-0-0 (8 KOs)
6.	**ROBERT HELENIUS**	Finland | 17-0-0 (11 KOs)
7.	**DENIS BOYTSOV**	Russia | 31-0-0 (25 KOs)
8.	**RUSLAN CHAGAEV**	Uzbekistan | 29-2-1 (18 KOs)
9.	**CHRIS ARREOLA**	U.S. | 35-2-0 (30 KOs)
10.	**TYSON FURY**	UK | 19-0-0 (14 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	**YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ**	Cuba | 26-1-0 (13 KOs)
1.	**MARCO HUCK**	Germany | 34-2-1 (25 KOs)
2.	**KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**	Poland | 46-2-1 (33 KOs)
3.	**STEVE CUNNINGHAM**	U.S. | 24-4-0 (12 KOs)
4.	**OLA AFOLABI**	UK | 19-2-4 (9 KOs)
5.	**DENIS LEBEDEV**	Russia | 24-1-0 (18 KOs)
6.	**ANTONIO TARVER**	U.S. | 29-6-1 (20 KOs)
7.	**GUILLERMO JONES**	Panama | 38-3-2 (30 KOs)
8.	**LATEEF KAYODE**	Nigeria | 18-0-1 (14 KOs)
9.	**GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**	Italy | 29-3-2 (12 KOs)
10.	**MATEUSZ MASTERNAK**	Poland | 27-0-0 (20 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C	**CHAD DAWSON**	U.S. | 31-1-0 (17 KOs)
1.	**BERNARD HOPKINS**	U.S. | 52-6-2 (32 KOs)
2.	**JEAN PASCAL**	Canada | 26-2-1 (16 KOs)
3.	**TAVORIS CLOUD**	U.S. | 24-0-0 (19 KOs)
4.	**NATHAN CLEVERLY**	UK | 24-0-0 (11 KOs)
5.	**GABRIEL CAMPILLO**	Spain | 21-4-1 (8 KOs)
6.	**BEIBUT SHUMENOV**	Kazakhstan | 13-1-0 (8 KOs)
7.	**KARO MURAT**	Germany | 25-1-1 (15 KOs)
8.	**MIKKEL KESSLER**	Denmark | 45-2-0 (34 KOs)
9.	**ISAAC CHILEMBA**	Malawi | 19-1-1 (9 KOs)
10.	**JUERGEN BRAEHMER**	Germany | 38-2-0 (30 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C	**ANDRE WARD**	U.S. | 25-0-0 (13 KOs)
1.	**CARL FROCH**	UK | 29-2-0 (21 KOs)
2.	**ROBERT STIEGLITZ**	Russia | 42-2-0 (23 KOs)
3.	**LUCIAN BUTE**	Romania | 30-1-0 (24 KOs)
4.	**THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN**	South Africa | 20-0-1 (13 KOs)
5.	**SAKIO BIKA**	Cameroon | 30-5-2 (21 KOs)
6.	**GEORGE GROVES**	UK | 15-0-0 (11 KOs)
7.	**ANDRE DIRRELL**	U.S. | 20-1-0 (14 KOs)
8.	**ARTHUR ABRAHAM**	Armenia | 34-3-0 (27 KOs)
9.	**EDWIN RODRIGUEZ**	Dominican Rep. | 21-0-0 (14 KOs)
10.	**ADONIS STEVENSON**	Canada | 18-1-0 (15 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina | 49-2-2 (28 KOs)

1. **FELIX STURM**
Germany | 37-2-2 (16 KOs)
2. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia | 27-1-0 (15 KOs)
3. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.**
Mexico | 46-0-1 (32 KOs)
4. **DMITRY PIROG**
Russia | 20-0-0 (15 KOs)
5. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
France | 27-0-0 (17 KOs)
6. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
UK | 28-4-0 (19 KOs)
7. **MARTIN MURRAY**
UK | 24-0-1 (10 KOs)
8. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
Kazakhstan | 23-0-0 (20 KOs)
9. **GRZEGORZ PROKSA**
Poland | 28-1-0 (21 KOs)
10. **PETER QUILLIN**
U.S. | 27-0-0 (20 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
U.S. | 43-0-0 (26 KOs)
2. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico | 37-3-0 (30 KOs)
3. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
Mexico | 40-0-1 (29 KOs)
4. **ERISLANDY LARA**
Cuba | 17-1-1 (11 KOs)
5. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
U.S. | 32-0-0 (20 KOs)
6. **CARLOS MOLINA**
Mexico | 19-5-2 (6 KOs)
7. **JAMES KIRKLAND**
U.S. | 31-1-0 (27 KOs)
8. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
U.S. | 32-4-0 (19 KOs)
9. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
Mexico | 20-2-0 (17 KOs)
10. **AUSTIN TROUT**
U.S. | 25-0-0 (14 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines | 54-4-2 (38 KOs)
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
U.S. | 43-0-0 (26 KOs)
3. **KELL BROOK**
UK | 28-0-0 (18 KOs)
4. **PAULIE MALIGNAGGI**
U.S. | 31-4-0 (7 KOs)
5. **JAN ZAVECK**
Slovenia | 32-2-0 (18 KOs)
6. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
U.S. | 29-0-0 (12 KOs)
7. **RANDALL BAILEY**
U.S. | 43-7-0 (37 KOs)
8. **JOSESITO LOPEZ**
U.S. | 30-4-0 (18 KOs)
9. **VICTOR ORTIZ**
U.S. | 29-4-2 (22 KOs)
10. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
U.S. | 30-1-1 (18 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C **DANNY GARCIA**
U.S. | 24-0-0 (15 KOs)

1. **LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
Argentina | 31-2-0 (29 KOs)
2. **AMIR KHAN**
UK | 26-3-0 (18 KOs)
3. **ZAB JUDAH**
U.S. | 42-7-0 (29 KOs)
4. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 54-6-1 (39 KOs)
5. **MIKE ALVARADO**
U.S. | 33-0-0 (23 KOs)
6. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico | 52-8-0 (36 KOs)
7. **KHABIB ALLAKHVERDIEV**
Russia | 17-0-0 (8 KOs)
8. **DENIS SHAFIKOV**
Russia | 29-0-1 (17 KOs)
9. **AJOSE OLUSEGUN**
Nigeria | 30-0-0 (14 KOs)
10. **PABLO CESAR CANO**
Mexico | 25-1-1 (19 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **ANTONIO DEMARCO**
Mexico | 27-2-1 (20 KOs)
2. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico | 31-3-0 (13 KOs)
3. **RICKY BURNS**
UK | 34-2-0 (9 KOs)
4. **KEVIN MITCHELL**
UK | 33-1-0 (24 KOs)
5. **JOHN MURRAY**
UK | 31-2-0 (18 KOs)
6. **JOHN MOLINA**
U.S. | 24-1-0 (19 KOs)
7. **RICHARD ABRIL**
Cuba | 17-3-1 (8 KOs)
8. **GAVIN REES**
UK | 37-1-1 (18 KOs)
9. **SHARIF BOGERE**
Uganda | 23-0-0 (15 KOs)
10. **RAYMUNDO BELTRAN**
Mexico | 26-6-0 (17 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
Japan | 18-0-1 (15 KOs)
2. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
Mexico | 25-1-1 (16 KOs)
3. **TAKAHIRO AO**
Japan | 23-2-1 (10 KOs)
4. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
Puerto Rico | 25-1-1 (16 KOs)
5. **DIEGO MAGDALENO**
U.S. | 23-0-0 (9 KOs)
6. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
Dominican Rep. | 20-2-0 (10 KOs)
7. **JUAN CARLOS BURGOS**
Mexico | 30-1-0 (20 KOs)
8. **JORGE SOLIS**
Mexico | 40-4-2 (29 KOs)
9. **JAVIER FORTUNA**
Dominican Rep. | 20-0-0 (15 KOs)
10. **BRYAN VASQUEZ**
Costa Rica | 29-0-0 (15 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
Cuba | 21-0-0 (16 KOs)
2. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
Mexico | 39-11-2 (27 KOs)
3. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia | 47-0-2 (22 KOs)
4. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
Mexico | 52-7-0 (45 KOs)
5. **MIKEY GARCIA**
U.S. | 28-0-0 (24 KOs)
6. **BILLY DIB**
Australia | 35-1-0 (21 KOs)
7. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico | 31-2-0 (28 KOs)
8. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
Mexico | 43-4-0 (35 KOs)
9. **CELESTINO CABALLERO**
Panama | 36-4-0 (23 KOs)
10. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
Japan | 30-4-0 (13 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan | 39-4-3 (24 KOs)
2. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
Cuba | 10-0-0 (8 KOs)
3. **NONITO DONAIRE**
Philippines | 29-1-0 (18 KOs)
4. **AKIFUMA SHIMODA**
Japan | 25-3-1 (11 KOs)
5. **P. KRATINGDAENGGYM**
Thailand | 47-2-0 (33 KOs)
6. **JEFFREY MATHEBULA**
South Africa | 26-4-2 (14 KOs)
7. **ABNER MARES**
U.S. | 24-0-1 (13 KOs)
8. **TAKALANI NDLOVU**
South Africa | 33-7-0 (18 KOs)
9. **STEVE MOLITOR**
Canada | 34-2-0 (12 KOs)
10. **RICO RAMOS**
U.S. | 21-1-0 (11 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another; 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders chose not to fight one another and either of them fights No. 3, No. 4 or No. 5, the winner may be awarded THE RING belt if the Editorial Board deems the contenders worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's Editorial Board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on RATINGS at RingTV.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **ANSELMO MORENO**
Panama | 33-1-1 (12 KOs)
2. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
Ghana | 28-4-0 (22 KOs)
3. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
Japan | 16-0-2 (11 KOs)
4. **KOKI KAMEDA**
Japan | 28-1-0 (17 KOs)
5. **ERIC MOREL**
U.S. | 46-3-0 (23 KOs)
6. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
Philippines | 30-2-3 (19 KOs)
7. **LEO SANTA CRUZ**
Mexico | 20-0-1 (11 KOs)
8. **JORGE ARCE**
Mexico | 60-6-2 (46 KOs)
9. **HUGO RUIZ**
Mexico | 31-1-0 (28 KOs)
10. **A.J. BANAL**
Philippines | 28-1-1 (28 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina | 36-1-2 (19 KOs)
2. **TEPPARITH SINGWANCHA**
Thailand | 20-2-0 (13 KOs)
3. **YOTA SATO**
Japan | 25-2-1 (12 KOs)
4. **SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI**
Thailand | 20-5-1 (7 KOs)
5. **TOMONOBU SHIMIZU**
Japan | 19-4-1 (9 KOs)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ**
Mexico | 14-1-1 (7 KOs)
7. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
Japan | 18-4-1 (12 KOs)
8. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
Mexico | 25-0-0 (21 KOs)
9. **RODEL MAYOL**
Philippines | 31-5-2 (22 KOs)
10. **RYO AKAHO**
Japan | 19-0-2 (12 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C **TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI**
Japan | 16-1-1 (10 KOs)

1. **HERNAN MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 34-2-0 (25 KOs)
2. **BRIAN VILORIA**
U.S. | 31-3-0 (18 KOs)
3. **SONNY BOY JARO**
Philippines | 34-11-5 (24 KOs)
4. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
S. Africa | 28-2-0 (19 KOs)
5. **MILAN MELINDO**
Philippines | 27-0-0 (11 KOs)
6. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand | 83-4-2 (44 KOs)
7. **ROCKY FUENTES**
Philippines | 33-6-2 (20 KOs)
8. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
Argentina | 28-1-0 (16 KOs)
9. **EDGAR SOSA**
Mexico | 46-7-0 (28 KOs)
10. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
Panama | 25-3-0 (20 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
Nicaragua | 32-0-0 (27 KOs)
2. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico | 34-2-3 (21 KOs)
3. **DONNIE NIETES**
Philippines | 30-1-3 (16 KOs)
4. **K. PORPRAMOOK**
Thailand | 45-3-0 (30 KOs)
5. **MASAYUKI KURODA**
Japan | 21-3-1 (13 KOs)
6. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
Mexico | 23-2-1 (15 KOs)
7. **RYO MIYAZAKI**
Japan | 17-0-3 (10 KOs)
8. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
Philippines | 17-2-0 (10 KOs)
9. **RYOICHI TAGUCHI**
Japan | 16-1-1 (7 KOs)
10. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
Peru | 28-8-0 (13 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **KAZUTO IOKA**
Japan | 10-0-0 (6 KOs)
2. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
South Africa | 22-0-0 (15 KOs)
3. **MOISES FUENTES**
Mexico | 15-1-0 (7 KOs)
4. **RAUL GARCIA**
Mexico | 32-2-1 (20 KOs)
5. **DENVER CUELLO**
Philippines | 31-4-6 (21 KOs)
6. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
Thailand | 23-0-0 (7 KOs)
7. **FLORANTE CONDES**
Philippines | 25-6-1 (21 KOs)
8. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan | 24-5-0 (10 KOs)
9. **AKIRA YAEGASHI**
Japan | 15-3-0 (8 KOs)
10. **PAIPHAROB KOKIETGYM**
Thailand | 19-0-0 (16 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

***NOTE:** The No. 1 position is vacant.*

2. **MANNY PACQUIAO** (TIE)
Philippines | 54-4-2 (38 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR** (TIE)
U.S. | 43-0-0 (26 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
3. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina | 49-2-2 (28 KOs) | MIDDLEWEIGHT
4. **NONITO DONAIRE**
Philippines | 29-1-0 (18 KOs) | JR. FEATHERWEIGHT
5. **ANDRE WARD**
U.S. | 25-0-0 (13 KOs) | SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 54-6-1 (39 KOs) | JR. WELTERWEIGHT
7. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine | 58-3-0 (51 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT
8. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
U.S. | 29-0-0 (12 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
9. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine | 44-2-0 (40 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT
10. **CHAD DAWSON**
U.S. | 31-1-0 (17 KOs) | LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

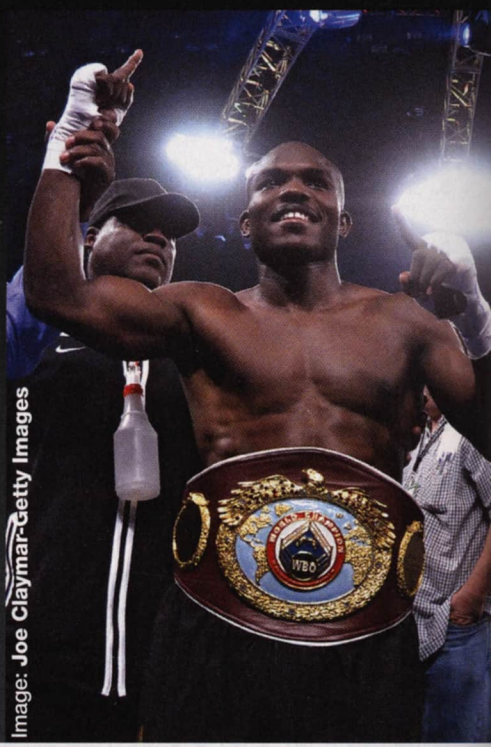


Image: Joe Claymar-Getty Images

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR BANNED SUBSTANCES

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positve for a banned substance.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a banned substance or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

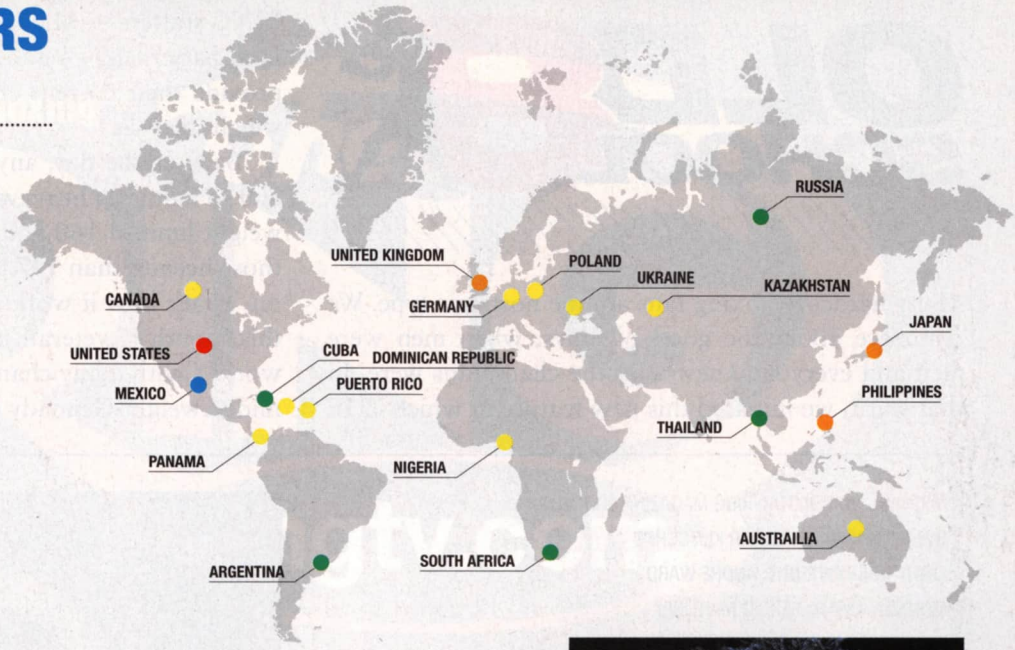
A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings. A boxer who is removed because of a postitive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jursidiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

UNITED STATES	31*
MEXICO	27
JAPAN	18
UNITED KINGDOM	14
PHILIPPINES	12
RUSSIA	7
THAILAND	7
CUBA	5
SOUTH AFRICA	5
ARGENTINA	4
GERMANY	4
PANAMA	4
POLAND	4
CANADA	3
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	3
PUERTO RICO	3
AUSTRALIA	2
KAZAKHSTAN	2
NIGERIA	2
UKRAINE	2
ARMENIA	1
BULGARIA	1
CAMEROON	1
COSTA RICA	1
DENMARK	1
FINLAND	1
FRANCE	1
GHANA	1
INDONESIA	1
ITALY	1
MALAWI	1
NICARAGUA	1
PERU	1
ROMANIA	1
SLOVENIA	1
SPAIN	1
UGANDA	1
UZBEKISTAN	1

Includes two ratings for Floyd Mayweather Jr. (junior middleweight, welterweight)



● 30 OR MORE
● 20 - 29 ● 10 - 19 ● 5 - 9 ● 2 - 4

ORTHODOX VS. SOUTHPAW

THE RING editors expected to find only a small percentage of left-handed fighters among the 176 in our ratings. Thus, we were surprised to find 48 southpaws — or 27 percent of the total. Only about 10 percent of people in general are left-handed. Here are the numbers of orthodox and southpaw fighters in the ratings, by division.

DIVISION	ORTHODOX	SOUTHPAW
HEAVYWEIGHTS	10	1
CRUISERWEIGHTS	8	3
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	8	3
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	7	4
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	9	2
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	7	3
WELTERWEIGHTS	7	3
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	7	4
LIGHTWEIGHTS	9	1
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	7	3
FEATHERWEIGHTS	7	3
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	6	4
BANTAMWEIGHTS	5	5
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	7	2
FLYWEIGHTS	8	3
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	10	0
STRAWWEIGHTS	6	4
TOTAL	128	48

HERE ARE THE SOUTHPAWS:
Heavyweight – Chagaev; **cruiserweight –** Hernandez, Lebedev, Tarver; **light heavyweight –** Dawson, Campillo, Braehmer; **super middleweight –** Bute, Oosthuizen, Dirrell, Stevenson; **middleweight –** Martinez, Proksa; **junior middleweight –** Lara, Kirkland, Trout; **welterweight –** Pacquiao, Ortiz, Guerrero; **junior welterweight –** Judah, Allakhverdiev, Shafikov, Olusegun; **lightweight –** DeMarco; **junior lightweight –** Ao, Magdaleno, Fortuna; **featherweight –** Lopez, Ponce de Leon, Hasegawa; **junior featherweight –** Nishioka, Rigondeaux, Shimoda, Molitor; **bantamweight –** Moreno, Yamanaka, Kameda, Tunacao, Banal; **junior bantamweight –** Narvaez, Sanchez; **flyweight –** Igarashi, Marquez, Wonjongkam; **junior flyweight –** none; **strawweight –** Joyi, Garcia, Cuello, Condes.

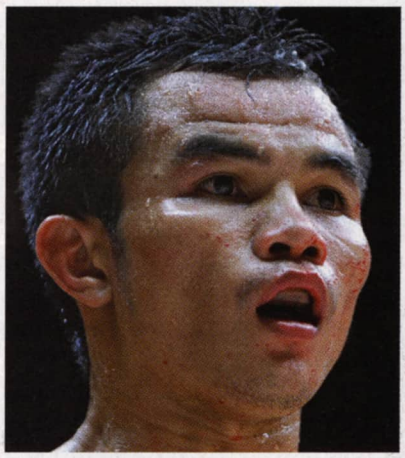


Image: Saeed Kahn-Getty Images

LONGEVITY

Fighters with the most weeks in the ratings.

596	**Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (flyweight)**
465	Felix Sturm (middleweight)
455	Manny Pacquiao (pound for pound)
433	Ulises Solis (junior flyweight)
433	Denver Cuello (strawweight)
426	Steve Cunningham (cruiserweight)
422	Chris John (featherweight)
381	Katsunari Takayama (strawweight)
377	Wladimir Klitschko (heavyweight)
374	Krzysztof Wlodarczyk (cruiserweight)
354	Steve Molitor (junior featherweight)
332	Lucian Bute (super middleweight)
323	Carl Froch (super middleweight)
323	Chad Dawson (light heavyweight)
323	Bernard Hopkins (light heavyweight)
317	Nobuo Nashiro (junior bantamweight)
300	Ruslan Chagaev (heavyweight)
280	Juan Manuel Marquez (pound for pound)
280	Sako Bika (super middleweight)
269	P. Kratingdaenggym (junior featherweight)

NOTE: *The country of fighters who have spent large portions of their lives in two countries was determined primarily by where they spent the bulk of their childhood.*

OLD SCHOOL 8

Many hardcore boxing fans are the nostalgic type. We reminisce about the good ol' days, when men were men and everyone knew who the champions were. In that spirit, we initiated this new feature in which THE RING staffers — Michael Rosenthal, Doug Fischer and Lem Satterfield — and a different guest each month provide their current champions in the original eight weight classes.

Back in the day, anyone heavier than 175 pounds had to fight as a heavyweight, fighters over the middleweight limit of 160 had to fight as light heavyweights, those heavier than 147 fought as middleweights and so on. That's how it works in our new feature. Our guest this month is veteran trainer Abel Sanchez, who has worked with many champions. He now trains talented middleweight Gennady Golovkin.

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HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
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MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
WELTERWEIGHT: MANNY PACQUIAO
LIGHTWEIGHT: ADRIEN BRONER
FEATHERWEIGHT: YURIORKIS GAMBOA
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: BRIAN VILORIA

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LIGHTWEIGHT: MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
FEATHERWEIGHT: CHRIS JOHN
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WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
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FEATHERWEIGHT: CHRIS JOHN
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO/NONITO DONAIRE
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

NOTE: *THESE LISTS WERE COMPILED THROUGH FIGHTS AS OF AUGUST 18.*

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SUPERSTAR POWER?

ADRIEN BRONER APPEARS TO HAVE IT ALL … BUT TIME WILL TELL

By **Ron Borges**

Image: **Bruce Crippen**

Adrien Broner has the numbers, it would appear. He clearly has the skills. So the question then becomes, in the end, does he also have the goods to be boxing's Next Big Thing?

If you ask Broner, the answer comes back faster than one of his piston-like combinations, which is to say in an ear-splittingly rapid torrent of words that overwhelm the questioner the way he has overwhelmed 24 straight opponents since turning professional four years ago.

"I make all my work easy!" he said moments after proving that point by blasting out 2004 U.S. Olympian Vicente Escobedo in five one-sided rounds in his last outing on July 21. "I'll take on anyone."

Anyone, that is, but the folks who make scales, because that is the only place where Broner has been beaten. While the undefeated former titleholder's last outing was artistically pleasing as well as a ratings bonanza for HBO Sports, it was also the fight for which he missed weight by 3½ pounds, effectively ending his brief reign in the junior lightweight division. Was that a result of his youthful body's natural growth or a laissez-faire attitude toward the demands of his sport?

Golden Boy Promotions matchmaker Eric Gomez shepherded Broner through that fight with the scales the day before the Escobedo match and is convinced this was not a matter of a young man with great talent conspiring against himself. It was, he says, simply a case of a young man outgrowing himself.

"The kid just grew," Gomez said. "I was in the middle of that, talking with Escobedo's people to keep the fight alive. They were there in the gym with us for two hours watching him. Broner tried to make that weight. He just couldn't do it.

"He was on the treadmill for 45 minutes. He went into the steam room. It was a difficult time because he just outgrew the division. If he was 30 years old and didn't make it, I'd be upset at that. This was just natural growth for a kid who's (then) 22.

Adrien Broner (left) dominated **Vicente Escobedo** before stopping him in five rounds on July 21. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

"He's gotten so big I think 140 will be his natural weight, but I could see him do what Floyd (Mayweather Jr.) did and go up to 147 and win. There's a couple of guys at 147 he could beat right now because of his speed and power, but we'd like to see him win a title at 135 and then move to 140."

Gomez had been negotiating to put Broner in an Oct. 6 fight with IBF lightweight titleholder Miguel Vazquez, but said Vazquez's handlers had little interest in that, so he's continued to search for a suitable opponent at that weight — assuming there is such a person — fully knowing it is not likely to be a division where Broner will long reside. Eventually they had to give up the search, pushing Broner's next fight back until sometime in November. That gives them more time to find an opponent suitable to HBO and at least plausibly competitive.

While it is difficult to know at this juncture what weight will prove to be his best, what is not difficult to see is that the wheels of promotion are behind him. Broner's flashy fighting style coupled with a willingness to say anything and fight anyone is a formula that worked well for Mayweather, who seems to be Broner's fistic role model and whose career is handled by the same manager, Al Haymon. While Mayweather's critics may insist he is running away from Manny Pacquiao, the public last year made Mayweather

the highest paid athlete in the world which, after all, is the real aim of prize fighting, is it not?

Broner (24-0, 20 knockouts) has a long way to go to move into Mayweather's neighborhood but he has quickly become the kind of personality that sells these days. As long as he keeps not only winning fights but dominating them, it will take a lot more than 3½ pounds of water weight to change that.

His near-constant bombast is another matter. Cocky to the edge of irritating, Broner has surely turned off more than a few fight fans with some of his recent stinging missives directed at other world champions and to anyone who might question his dominance or his place among boxing's most elite practitioners.

He is nothing if not a self-promoter and this is an age where self-promotion is in vogue, but there is a murky line there somewhere and, if crossed, brash talk suddenly becomes counterproductive. Knowing where that line is can be difficult, although young Brandon Rios found it when he mocked five-time Trainer of the Year Freddie Roach's ongoing battle with Parkinson's last year and it was caught on video.

Rios and his manager were quick to make a public apology, but he has never been looked at quite the same since by many fans. Broner has never gone that far, focusing most of his commentary on his own greatness or the futility of any other fighter thinking he can beat him. It is the kind of thing that worked well for Mayweather because he understood that people who want to see him beaten or quieted will pay for pay-per-view just as his fans do. Still, it is something the people around Broner know has to be kept under control.

"Personally I think it's OK to trash talk a little," Gomez said. "Broner's a confident guy and he wants everyone to know it. But there are certain things you've got to be careful with. If you say the wrong thing, then you're Public Enemy No. 1. (Prince Naseem) Hamed did that. He rubbed a lot of people the wrong way. It was fine when he was fighting, but when he was done and he needed help nobody would give him a hand.

"Adrien has a good team around him. He has a great manager in Al Hayman. Al talks to him every day.

Adrien Broner (left) seemed to toy with **Vicente Escobedo** at times before taking him out. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Those guys are working with him about who is around him and the consequences of what he says. We all feel the only guy who can beat him is himself."

According to HBO, Broner's brief beef with Escobedo (it would be stretching it to call it an actual fight so one-sided was the action) attracted 1.4 million live viewers, making it the most viewed *Boxing After Dark* show of the year and the fourth-most viewed HBO fight in 2012 behind Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.'s showdown with Marco Antonio Rubio (1.9 million live viewers) and Chavez's win over Andy Lee, which tied the Bernard Hopkins-Chad Dawson rematch with 1.6 million live viewers. What is telling from Broner's point of view is that Hopkins is a boxing legend who is a certain first-ballot Hall of Famer if he ever agrees to retire, and Chavez is the son of one, while Broner is a kid who came up the hard way, fighting his way from a hard-scrabble life in Cincinnati to a rising national profile.

Broner was not the product of a gold medal Olympic Games nor is Cincinnati a mecca for boxing talent. Although he comes out of the same gym that produced former Olympian Ricardo Williams and out of the same town that has given boxing Aaron Pryor, Ezzard Charles and Tim Austin among others, Cincinnati is not exactly Brooklyn when it comes to exporting world-class boxers. Suffice it to say, Broner's climb from obscurity to the cusp of boxing stardom has been uphill and littered with pot holes. But at the moment, if weight problems or his own bombast don't derail him, he seems likely to dominate the lightweight division, where he has now settled, and in all likelihood well beyond that.

"I'm young," Broner said of missing the junior lightweight limit by nearly a full weight division. "I'm 22. I'm still growing. I just feel like it's time for me to go up. After this (Escobedo) fight, there really wouldn't be a reason for me to stay (at junior lightweight). I'm

Vicente Escobedo's corner had no choice but to stop his fight against **Adrien Broner**. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Adrien Broner (left) struggled to outpoint veteran **Daniel Ponce de Leon** last year but also proved he could persevere when necessary. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

just going to go up and give the lightweights hell."

That is the prevailing opinion of most boxing experts and when one looks at the top rated fighters in the division, it seems a fair assessment. WBO champion Ricky Burns (34-2, 9 KOs) moved out of the junior lightweight division to avoid Broner but now finds he's been tracked down by him again. There would appear to be little to fear from WBC beltholder Antonio DeMarco (27-2-1, 20 KOs) or Vazquez (31-3, 13 KOs), either. The one possible challenge at 135 could come from young John Molina (24-1, 19 KOs), who was scheduled to face DeMarco on Sept. 8. But Broner would be a heavy favorite in that fight as well and may continue to be one against most everyone else until he gets to the junior welterweight division, where attractive possibilities exist with recently KO'd former two-division titleholder Amir Khan, controversial IBF titleholder Lamont Peterson, power-punching Lucas Matthysse and crafty Juan Manuel Marquez, or the resurgent Zab Judah.

But the ideal money-making showdown for Broner at 140 would be with kindred spirit Brandon Rios, a former titleholder who loves to trash talk and lost the same battle of the bulge Broner did when he missed weight in consecutive lightweight title fights before moving up to 140 himself.

"He wants everybody, this guy," Gomez said of Broner. "He's cocky, yes, but he's confident in his abilities. He talks, but he can back it up. Not many guys can match his speed, and at this stage of his career I think he might have more power than Floyd did.

"He and Brandon would be a good fight, but there are a lot of attractive fights for Adrien."

While true, the real money and the real challenges would come at welterweight, a leap of 12 pounds and two divisions. It's a jump for which Broner may not yet be physically ready, but you couldn't convince him of that. He recently engaged in a war of tweets with IBF welterweight beltholder Robert Guerrero on Twitter, the sometimes anti-social social media tool, which exemplifies his approach and his mindset. In a nutshell, Broner's position was he'd be more than happy to remove that belt from Guerrero's waist sooner rather than later.

Both defeated Escobedo but Broner claimed he had been more dominating. Guerrero countered that was because Broner came in overweight, an exchange that led Broner to tweet "3lbs don't make a difference, that's why I'm willing to jump up 3 weight classes to kick your ass. Let's be real, you know I'm the man when I got 147lb guys

Adrien Broner (left) struggled to outpoint veteran **Daniel Ponce de Leon** last year but also proved he could persevere when necessary. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

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trying to make a big fight with me because they can't sell they self."

Guerrero countered that Broner should go beat the No. 1 contender and then call him. Guerrero should be careful with that. Broner just might — and it might not take long.

"A guy like Guerrero would be a great fight," said Gomez, whose job it is to make such fights for Golden Boy Promotions, which happens to handle both guys. "Guerrero himself just moved up in weight. You can debate whether or not Adrien is a 147-pounder or not right now, but there are guys up there he can go after because not many guys will match his speed.

"He's already told me, 'Get me Guerrero.' That's the kind of guy he is. He's so talented right away there's pressure from fans to put him in the big fights. It's timing with a lot of these guys, but before it's all said and done, this kid will fight everybody."

The welterweight division is presently the fistic residence of Mayweather, Tim Bradley, Pacquiao, Andre Berto and Victor Ortiz, as well as Guerrero. It is a place where big money can be made and Broner, though only now entering the lightweight division, knows it.

What Broner also knows is he won't be a lightweight for long. He recently went so far as to call out Pacquiao, claiming he could beat the Filipino icon before he even got to Mayweather (whom Broner also said Pacquiao couldn't beat).

Such bravado may be misplaced for the moment, but it sells. What sells more are the kind of beatings Broner has been putting on the majority of his opponents since first turning pro on May 31, 2008. That night he stopped Allante Davis in one round, something he did in his first three fights before Gomez got his first look at him. He didn't need a second.

"We put him in a card and he knocked out a guy named Terrance Jett with three left hooks," Gomez recalled. "Bam! Bam! Bam! The first one hurt the guy, the second knocked him down and the third one hit him before he hit the floor. I thought right then he had something special. He's still learning. It's scary how good this kid could be."

Not to Broner, who loves the sound of his own drum only slightly less than the sound of the crowd roaring his name — and always has. That love affair with himself dates back to the age of 6, when he was already sure of where his future lay even though he had yet to meet the man who would help him solidify it.

"Long as I can remember I always wanted to box," Broner explained. "We would box in the yard. Since I was small I knew I was good. I know I have the talent. I'm not going to let it go to waste."

Mike Stafford will tell you that Broner has shown that resolve since the first night he laid eyes on him. Broner was a 7-year-old kid with no idea how to box when Broner's father showed up at Stafford's gym with his twin boys and urged the veteran trainer to put Adrien in with future three-time Olympian Rau'shee Warren.

Warren was only 9 then but already had a growing reputation in amateur circles. He was seen as a fighter with a future. Adrien Broner had no idea who he was. Nor did he care.

"He made me cry," Broner admitted, recalling that first meeting, "but I came back the next day."

And the next and the next and the next, and he's still coming back, a fighter addicted to training and to winning.

"Adrien was about 55 pounds and right away his dad kind of threw him in there," Stafford recalled. "He wanted me to put him in with Rau'shee, who was 55 pounds, too, but 2 years older. His dad had heard of Rau'shee. You know how those dads can be.

Adrien Broner knows how to celebrate after a victory, this one over **Vicente Escobedo**. Image: **Pat Lovell-Hoganphotos**

"It didn't go Adrien's way. He took a pounding. He was crying, but he kept trying. When he left, the last thing his father said was, 'He'll be back tomorrow.' And he was. He came back and he never left.

"I knew right away he had speed and athletic talent. You could see right away Adrien was something special.

"I never cared who they put in front of him. I never had no hesitation. We feel we're ready for anybody. Golden Boy knew we weren't scared to take any fight so they were able to put Adrien on some big HBO cards at a young age and he passed every test.

"He'll pass the next one, too. It don't make no difference who he fights."

That's how Adrien Broner sees things as well. He's just waiting to show you and the rest of the world how true that is. ■

Adrien Broner (right, against **Eloy Perez**) is among a group of talented young fighters poised to become major stars. Image: **Tom Hogan-Hoganphotos**

NEXT GENERATION

ONE OR MORE OF THESE FIVE FIGHTERS COULD RULE THE SPORT FOR YEARS TO COME

By **Doug Fischer**

Something unfortunate but inevitable happened while the boxing world waited for Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather to fight during the past three years: They started getting old.

Pacquiao, once the sport's most dynamic fighter, slowed down enough for Tim Bradley to spring the upset in June. One month earlier, Mayweather was expected to destroy Miguel Cotto but the Puerto Rican veteran extended the fight game's most celebrated ring general in a surprisingly competitive fight. This doesn't mean that boxing's power duo should be put out to pasture. Most observes of sound mind believe Pacquiao did more than enough to outpoint Bradley. And Mayweather defeated Cotto by a wide unanimous decision despite a few hairy moments while crowded into a ring corner.

However, even the most ardent Pacquiao and Mayweather fans will admit their heroes are not as sharp as they were a few years ago. Mayweather turned 35 in February. Pacquiao, who turned pro at 16 and has 60 pro bouts under his belt, is a battle-worn 33.

Both are still on top of the boxing world in terms of their ability to fight and generate money, as well as their popularity, but chances are good that they won't be in another year or two.

So who will fill the void when Mayweather and Pacquiao retire or fall from their lofty perch? Those are awfully big shoes to fill, even for the most talented and accomplished young fighter.

Mayweather and Pacquiao have done more than collect major titles and top pound-for-pound lists in recent years. They have captivated hardcore boxing followers and general sports fans with their personalities, their fights and the media build-up to those events. They have filled major arenas and sold millions of pay-per-view buys.

Whoever replaces them will have to be more than an elite-level boxer. He will also need to have star potential and the necessary world-class opponents to not only create compelling matchups but to bring out the best of his skill, talent and heart.

All of the superstars of past decades had "dance partners" to help them define their greatness. Muhammad Ali had Joe Frazier, Ken Norton and George Foreman. Sugar Ray Leonard had Roberto Duran, Thomas Hearns and Marvin Hagler.

Only a handful of up-and-comers have the right combination of talent, personality, and potential ring rivals to emerge as the next King of Boxing.

Here are five candidates (listed in alphabetical order) and the reasons they might ascend to the throne — and why they might not.

Image: Naoki Fukuda

SAUL ALVAREZ

AGE: 22
RECORD: 40-0-2, 29 knockouts
WEIGHT CLASS: Junior middleweight
TITLE(S): WBC junior middleweight
ABILITY: "Canelo" is not the most naturally gifted boxer. He does not have world-class speed, power or reflexes. However, he's very strong — physically and mentally — and he's versatile. The native of Guadalajara, Mexico, successfully blends competent technique, responsible defense and a warrior's heart. In other words, he can box and he doesn't invite punishment but he looks to do damage and he knows when to close the show. Alvarez hasn't been in with the absolute best of the 154-pound division but he hasn't been matched easy. So far, he's proven to be good enough to remain unbeaten after 42 professional bouts. **GRADE: C+**

MARKETABILITY: Being a fair-skinned redhead with freckles makes him somewhat exotic in Mexico, but Alvarez's immense popularity in his home nation is due to more than genetic features. He has the right fighting style to go with a humble charm outside of the ring that resonates with Mexican fans. It doesn't hurt that he's been fighting on network television in Mexico since he was 17 years old (he turned pro at 15). Alvarez brings his Mexican fan base to his fights in America. His first headliner in the U.S., a title bout against Matthew Hatton last February on HBO, drew more than 11,000 fans to the Honda Center in Anaheim, Calif. **GRADE: A-**

POTENTIAL RIVALS: Alvarez has a great mix of hall-of-fame-bound veterans and hungry young guns at 154 pounds against whom to test himself. Mayweather is the top man in the division, followed by Cotto. A fight with either can solidify Alvarez's name in the U.S. Beyond the legends are many worthy contenders, including the winner of the proposed Vanes Martirosyan-Erislandy Lara fight, James Kirkland, Alfredo Angulo and Austin Trout. **GRADE: A**

POSSIBLE ROAD BLOCKS: Alvarez could get his wish and land a super fight with Mayweather or Cotto sooner rather than later. If that happens, it's likely that either veteran beats him so handily that he loses all credibility among American fans.

OVERALL GRADE: B+
Alvarez's lack of natural talent could hold him back against the very best, but youth and time are on his side.

Image: Naoki Fukuda

ADRIEN BRONER

AGE: 22
RECORD: 24-0, 20 knockouts
WEIGHT CLASS: Lightweight
TITLE(S): WBO junior lightweight (2011-2012)

ABILITY: Broner's the total package in terms of ability. He has world-class athleticism that includes blinding speed, explosive power and ultra-quick reflexes. The former amateur prodigy also has a strong skill set with defensive-offensive technique that has drawn comparisons to Mayweather. His blend of boxing and athletic ability overwhelmed unbeaten contender Eloy Perez (TKO 4) and respected veteran Vicente Escobedo (TKO 5), although it must be noted that he came in heavy for the Escobedo fight. **GRADE: A**

MARKETABILITY: Broner isn't a huge ticket seller, although he does respectable numbers in his native Cincinnati, but his cheeky, polarizing personality is a perfect fit for the social media age. Broner's roguish charisma is expressed through his post-fight hair-brushing shtick, unique fashion sense, fledgling rap career, and his Twitter account where the tweets are often ridiculous, sometimes vulgar and occasionally offensive. He's cocky before, during and after his fights and he loves to showboat. Put simply: "The Problem" is the type of fighter fans either love or hate — but they all want to watch him. **GRADE: A**

POTENTIAL RIVALS: By his own admission, Broner has outgrown the junior lightweight division and now heads to lightweight, where winners of the Antonio DeMarco-John Molina and Ricky Burns-Kevin Mitchell title bouts present a step-up in competition. However, more formidable challenges are at junior welterweight, where the Brandon Rios-Mike Alvarado winner, Lucas Matthysse, and RING champ Danny Garcia await. **GRADE: A-**

ROAD BLOCKS: At lightweight, tall, gangly IBF titleholder Miguel Vazquez has the size, durability and awkward technical style to give The Problem problems. The top 140-pound fighters might be too big and powerful for him. There's also a chance that his sometimes-obnoxious attitude will turn off mainstream fans.

OVERALL GRADE: A
Broner has all the ingredients to become a star — natural talent, high-level skill, an outgoing personality, many quality potential rivals, and the attention of the boxing world.

Image: Naoki Fukuda

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.

AGE: 26
RECORD: 46-0-1, 32 knockouts
WEIGHT CLASS: Middleweight
TITLE(S): WBC middleweight
ABILITY: Chavez isn't going to blow fans away with his athletic prowess. His hand speed, coordination and punching power are average at best. At times he appears ponderous in the ring. However, he has overwhelmed superior boxers and athletes with a potent combination of size — he often adds 20 pounds to his thick 6-foot-1 frame between the weigh-in and fight night – durability, pressure, and body-oriented volume punching. "The Son of the Legend" has definitely inherited his father's fierce fighting pride and iron chin. **GRADE: C+**

MARKETABILITY: Being a Chavez in Mexico is like having the last name of Ali, Robinson or Leonard (and being related to those ring greats) for an American boxer. "Junior" had the attention of an entire nation when he turned pro, and though there were times when it seemed he would let them down due to a lack of discipline, his recent performances and new dedication to the sport — under Freddie Roach's expert guidance — have Mexican, Mexican-American and hardcore fans buzzing as if his old man were making a comeback. **GRADE: A**

POTENTIAL RIVALS: Chavez and RING champ Sergio Martinez — who he fights on Sept. 15 — are the only names at middleweight, but the 160-pound division has solid contenders who hail from many parts of the globe. The winner of the Felix Sturm-Daniel Geale WBA/IBF title unification bout, former champ Kelly Pavlik, rugged contender Matthew Macklin and a collection of unbeaten tough guys that includes Dmitry Pirog, Gennady Golovkin, Martin Murray and Peter Quillin all could make for entertaining fights. **GRADE: B**

ROAD BLOCKS: Chavez is about to climb into the ring with the biggest threat of his career. Martinez has the ability to not only defeat him but dish out a career-shortening beating.

OVERALL GRADE: B+
Even if he loses to Martinez, Chavez could gain a lot of credibility just by giving the Argentine veteran a tough time. If he wins, he could become a crossover star.

Image: Ethan Miller-Getty Images

NONITO DONAIRE

AGE: 29
RECORD: 29-1, 18 knockouts
WEIGHT CLASS: Junior featherweight
TITLE(S): IBF flyweight (2007-09), WBC/WBO bantamweight (2011), WBO/IBF junior featherweight (2012)
ABILITY: Donaire lives up to his "Filipino Flash" nickname. He's a skilled boxer blessed with explosive speed and power and excellent hand-eye coordination. He looked like a 118-pound version of the prime Roy Jones Jr. when he bludgeoned Wladimir Sidorenko and nearly decapitated Fernando Montiel. He hasn't been as dominating at 122 pounds but his decision victories over beltholders Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. and Jeffrey Mathebula were still impressive. It's clear that as Donaire rises in weight, he'll have to rely more on his speed and boxing ability than his power. **GRADE: A**

MARKETABILITY: Donaire has a strong national following as a result of the sport's popularity in the Philippines in the wake of Pacquiao's meteoric rise. He also has a growing fan base in the U.S. thanks to his vibrant personality, phenomenal talent, pound-for-pound-level accomplishments and recent appearances on HBO. **GRADE: B+**

POTENTIAL RIVALS: Donaire occupies one of deepest divisions in the sport, and hardcore fans are ready to see him take on fellow titleholders Guillermo Rigondeaux and Abner Mares NOW. However, those high-profile showdowns will have to wait until Donaire fights former beltholder Toshiaki Nishioka for THE RING's vacant title on Oct. 13. Popular Mexican veteran Jorge Arce would also make for a marketable opponent. **GRADE: A**

ROAD BLOCKS: His next fight against Nishioka, THE RING's No. 1-rated junior featherweight, is a very risky one. The savvy Japanese veteran has the experience and tricky style to beat any 122-pound fighter.

OVERALL GRADE: A-
If Donaire can defeat Nishioka, as well as Rigondeaux and/or Mares, he will have put together a win streak that is worthy of the top spot in the mythical pound-for-pound rankings. Plus, he has the charisma and personal style to parlay that industry respect into celebrity status.

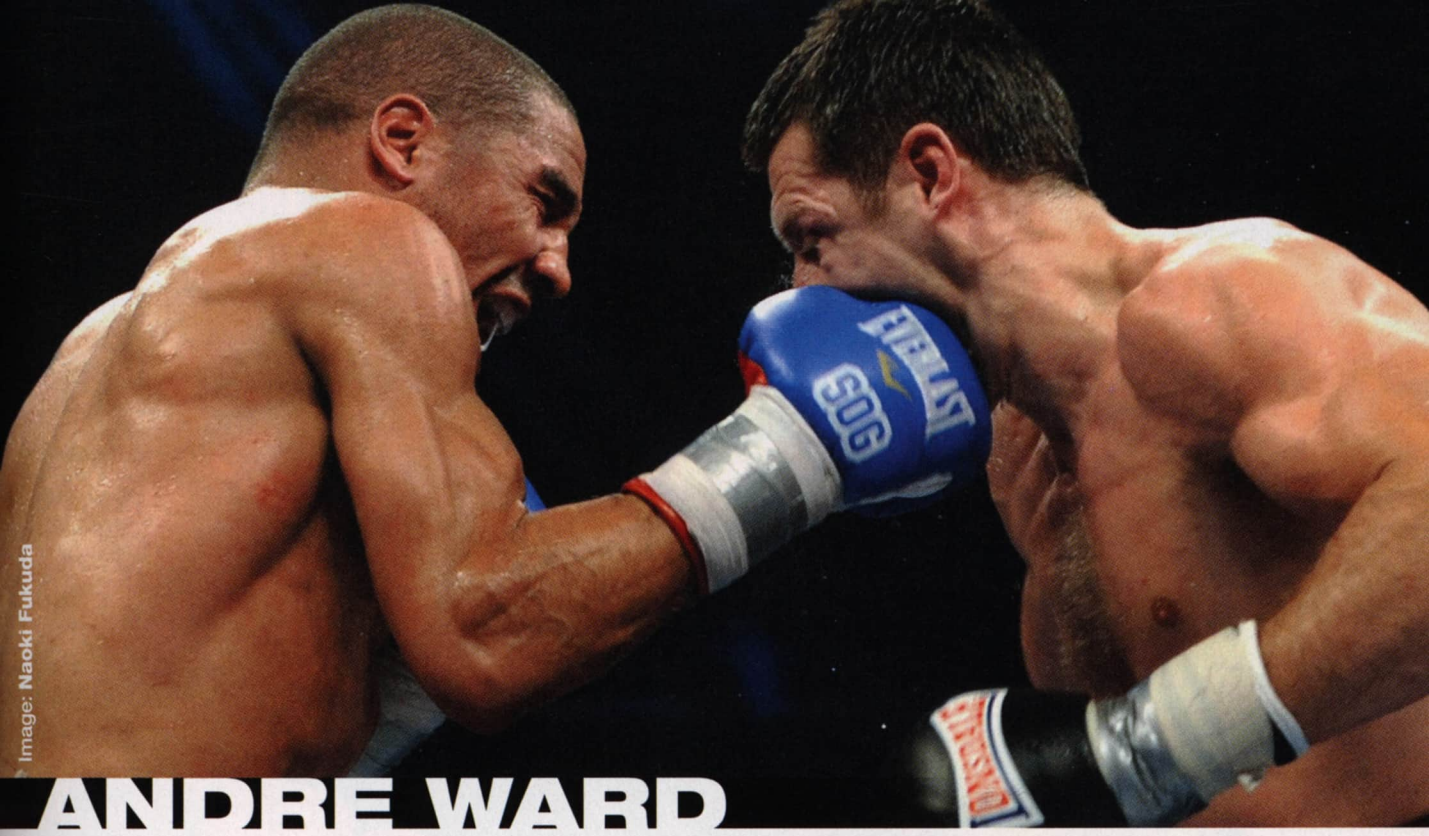

Image: Naoki Fukuda

ANDRE WARD

AGE: 28
RECORD: 25-0, 13 knockouts
WEIGHT CLASS: Super middleweight
TITLE(S): WBA (2009-present), WBC (2011-present), THE RING (2011-present)
ABILITY: Ward is a gifted athlete. He possesses superlative speed, reflexes, coordination and physical strength. However, his best attribute is his razor-sharp mind and uncanny ability to systematically nullify his opponents' strengths during the course of a fight. Ward breaks down world-class fighters with a blend of brute force and ring generalship that reminds many fans of a prime Bernard Hopkins. **GRADE: A**

MARKETABILITY: Ward has the respect of the boxing world. He evolved from a talented but untested prospect to a top contender/titleholder to bona-fide champ and pound-for-pound player in just 25 months by dominating Mikkel Kessler, Allan Green, Arthur Abraham and Carl Froch en route to winning the Super Six World Boxing Classic tournament. In terms of emotional maturity, class and focus, Ward is the "Anti-Broner," but sadly, in an era of sensationalism and reality TV, that could work against him. Most fans crave drama outside the ropes as much as they do inside the ring. Ward is too smart (and too good) to struggle against even the best super middleweights and has too much common sense, decency and religion to screw up or act foolishly away from the sport. He does everything right, which makes him a role model for children and young boxers, but he bores some fans and members of the media. **GRADE: B-**

POTENTIAL RIVALS: Ward almost cleaned out the 168-pound division in the Super Six tournament. The one elite super middleweight who didn't participate, Lucian Bute, was knocked out by Froch earlier this year. So Ward has turned to the light heavyweight division for challenges, starting with RING champ Chad Dawson at super middleweight on Sept. 8. If Ward beats Dawson, many worthy contenders — including Jean Pascal, Tavoris Cloud, Nathan Cleverly, Beibut Shumenov and Gabriel Campillo — reside in the 175-pound division to test him. **GRADE: B**

ROAD BLOCKS: Although Dawson is dropping down to 168 pounds, he still represents the most difficult and potentially dangerous opponent of Ward's career. Ward's habit of turning seemingly competitive matchups into one-sided routs could turn off some fans and media as could his overt Christian faith and straight-edge personality.

OVERALL GRADE: B
If Ward keeps winning against top opposition, he will eventually climb to the top of everyone's pound-for-pound lists, at which point his serious demeanor and intelligence will at least command respect among casual fans. The fact that he's an articulate American boxer helps his chances of crossing over.

Abner Mares (right) could emerge as a major star with one or two important victories. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

FIVE MORE

TYSON FURY AND DAVID PRICE – The heavyweight division is still a glamour weight class in Europe, where British fans are the most loyal and passionate of the European nations. THE RING-rated Fury and Price, a 2008 Olympic bronze medalist, have the youth, size and talent to take over the division once the Klitschko brothers retire.

TIMOTHY BRADLEY – Although the undefeated two-division titleholder lacks a large dedicated following, he has all the ability and determination in the world. His victory over Pacquiao was controversial but if he can legitimately beat the Filipino icon in a rematch and string together title defenses against likes of Andre Berto, Victor Ortiz, Paul Malignaggi, Kell Brook, or Robert Guerrero, the sports world might embrace him.

ABNER MARES – Who says Donaire is a lock to take over the 122-pound division? The Southern California-raised Mexican will defend his WBC title against THE RING's No. 1-rated bantamweight, Anselmo Moreno, in November. If he wins, he'll break into the pound-for-pound ratings. If he beats Donaire, he'll not only move into the pound-for-pound Top 5, he'll attain the devotion of arguably the most die-hard boxing fans in the U.S.

YURIORKIS GAMBOA – There's still time for the ultra-talented Cuban to achieve his immense potential. Signing with Mayweather and rapper 50 Cent's newly formed TMT Promotions is a start. Facing top 130- and 135-pound fighters such as Diego Magdaleno, Juan Carlos Salgado, DeMarco, Vazquez or Burns — and beating them — would be a huge step in the right direction. Challenging Broner and defeating the upstart would instantly make him a major player in the sport. ■

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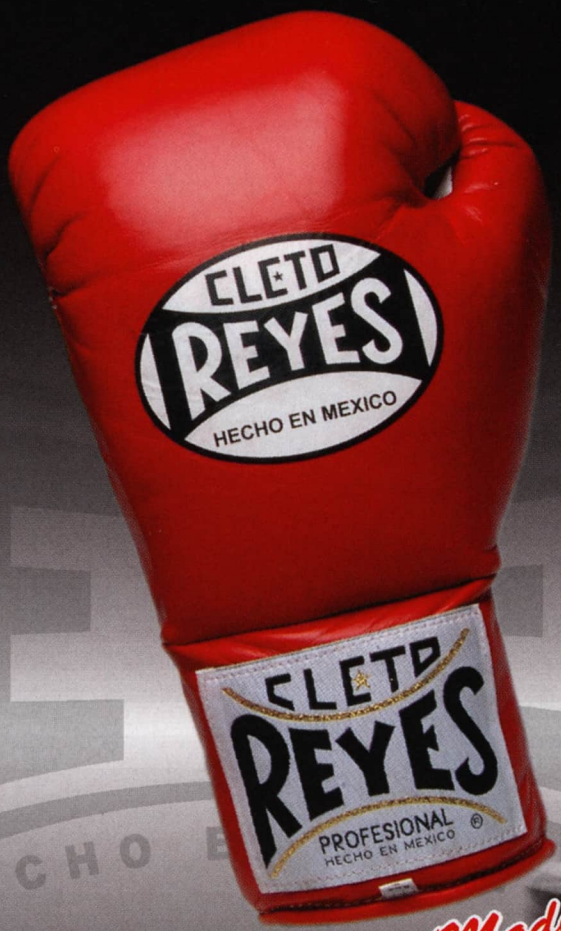

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IS BOXING NEXT?

THE NFL IS FACING A RASH OF CONCUSSION LAWSUITS BUT BOXING MIGHT BE SPARED BECAUSE OF ITS NATURE

By **Norm Frauenheim**

Concussion lawsuits against the NFL have their roots in boxing, but it's not clear whether the legal action will spread to boxing with civil suits filed by retired fighters suffering from head injuries.

A chaotic collection of state commissions (instead of a single authority, such as the NFL), limited budgets for regulators, international ruling bodies and an absence of unity among the fighters themselves make a lawsuit difficult.

There's also never been any doubt about the risk, which fighters have accepted for as long as they have been willing to step through the ropes and into harm's way.

"It's something you sign up for," said heavyweight prospect Seth Mitchell, a former Michigan State linebacker and onetime NFL prospect. "The concussion issue is not something I worry about. Not really. I trust the commissions and their work to protect us as much as possible. You know what you're getting into. Like I said, you know what you signed up for."

That might prove to be the key difference between boxing and the NFL. More than 3,000 players are named in lawsuits against the league, according to NFLconcussionlitigation.com. The lawsuits contend that the NFL concealed dangers first known in boxing more than 80 years ago.

In 1928, a New Jersey medical examiner, Dr. Harrison Martland, introduced "punch drunk" to the boxing lexicon. It's a term that describes the sad, thick-tongued plight of aging and retired fighters who have taken too many punches. In the 1950s, medical research on brains of punch-drunk fighters revealed damage that was compared to Alzheimer's disease.

With the research, there was a new term, "CTE," short for chronic traumatic encephalopathy. CTE is a risk that athletes in high-impact sports should know about, medical scientists in New Zealand said in 1975. Retired football players allege that they never got the warning.

No one disputes the number of shots to the head endured by boxers, who obviously understand the dangers going into the ring. Staged image: **Mike Powell-Getty Images**

▶ The NFL is dealing with a number of lawsuits over concussions, which are a common occurrence. Image: **Donald Miralle-Getty Images**

Mitchell, whose NFL hopes ended with a knee injury, learned how to play football in the Maryland prep ranks when concussions were still treated almost like another bruise.

"Truth is, I can really recall only suffering from one, and that was in high school," said Mitchell, who, following a hand injury, was scheduled for a comeback on Oct. 6 against Jonathon Banks in Atlantic City, N.J. "I got hit, continued playing, but I don't remember anything after that hit. But that's it. Even at Michigan State, I don't recall suffering from a concussion."

But Mitchell does remember trying to deliver head blows that could result in one.

"I'd look for that ear hole on the helmet," said Mitchell, who has been fighting at between 240 and 245 pounds. "Absolutely, that ear hole would be my target."

Football players, at 200-plus pounds and padded in plastic armor, can run full speed at around 20 mph. Each head-on collision exerts tremendous force, and with multiple impacts within a three-to-four-hour game the concussions multiply into real danger. In some ways, Mitchell feels safer in the ring, perhaps because the dangers are known enough to be prepared and always wary. Only a fool wouldn't be.

"Mentally, boxing is tougher than football," Mitchell said. "You learn to deal with the punches. You roll with

Heavyweight **Seth Mitchell**, a former college football player who suffered a concussion in high school, said the risk in boxing is "something you sign up for." Image: **Al Bello-Getty Images**

them. You're looking for them. Truth is, I haven't been hit by many big punches. The secret to long careers, like Bernard Hopkins and Floyd Mayweather Jr., is in knowing how to do that and doing it consistently.

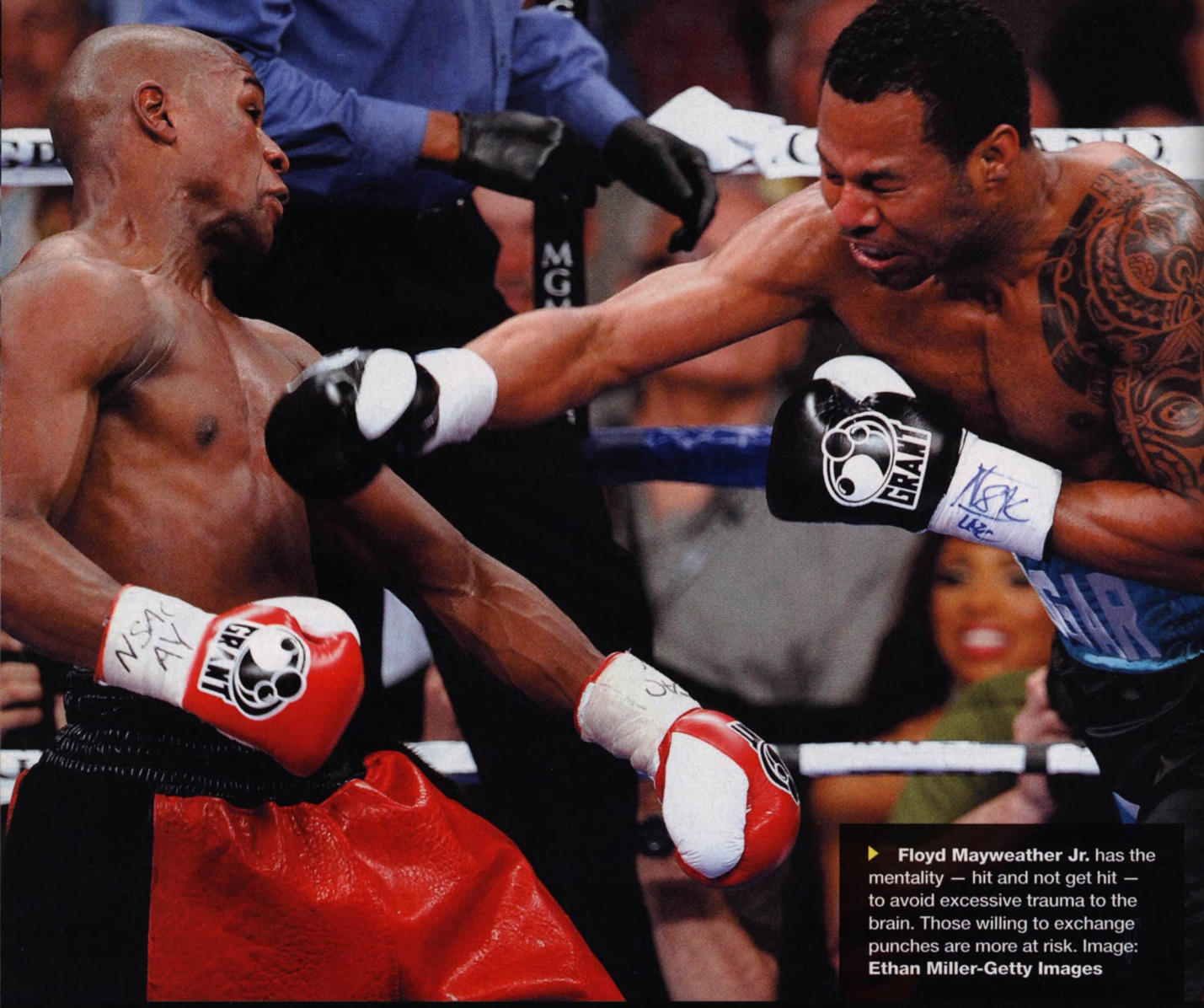
"Problems start, I think, with fighters who take two and three punches to throw one. That's when you can set yourself up for trouble."

The tactical formula — take two or three for one — is a deadly exchange, according to recent studies, including one in Las Vegas at the Cleveland Clinic's Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health. Dr. Charles Bernick has been examining a pool of about 170 boxers for the last year. Cognitive function declines as a result of repeated blows to the head, Bernick said in April in a report to the American Academy of Neurology in New Orleans.

Bernick also reported that the decline was exhibited by those who had fought for more than 12 years. Those who had fought for between six and 12 years did not.

It's hard to know whether the various state commissions will adopt Bernick's conclusions in a state-of-the-art guide on whether to allow a fighter to continue his career or to fight on during a single bout. We'll have to wait on that one.

For the here and now, however, there's still a debate about whether boxers got — or get — timely warnings about their condition



Floyd Mayweather Jr. has the mentality — hit and not get hit — to avoid excessive trauma to the brain. Those willing to exchange punches are more at risk. Image: **Ethan Miller-Getty Images**

often enough from vigilant regulators. It leaves an open-ended question about whether the NFL lawsuits could spread to boxing.

If it's a concern, it wasn't evident in late July during a national meeting of the Association of Boxing Commissions in Clearwater, Fla. The issue wasn't on the agenda, not even as an item for discussion, according to Dennis O'Connell, an attorney and chief executive of the Arizona State Boxing & MMA Commission, who was there.

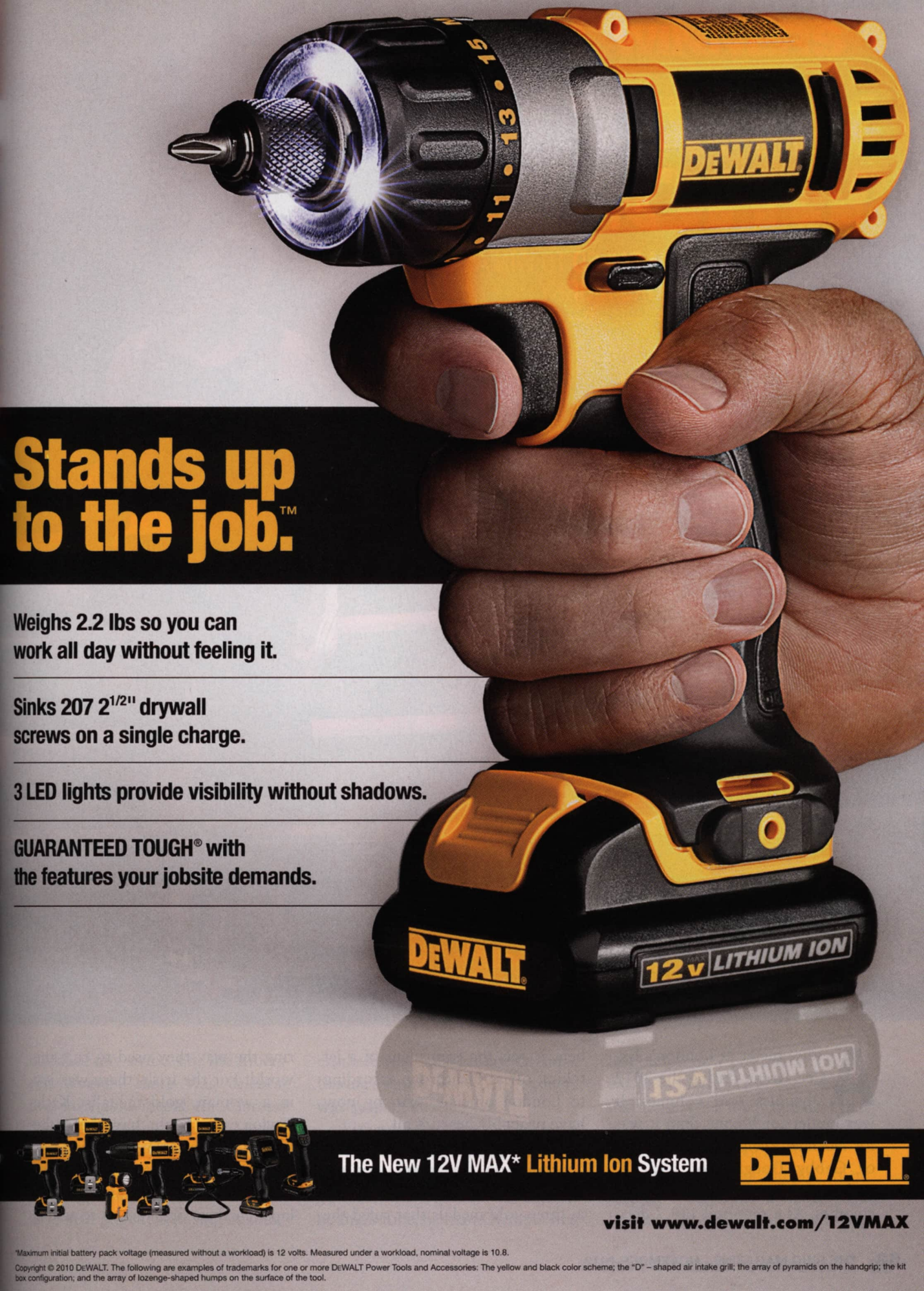
That absence was no surprise to Dr. Margaret Goodman, a former ringside physician for the Nevada State Athletic Commission and a frequent critic of boxing regulators.

"Boxing has pretty much ignored the NFL issue — and the issue of CTE," said Goodman, a Las Vegas neurologist and president of the Voluntary Anti-Doping Association (VADA). " I have mentioned this many times, and like with so many things, boxing hides its head in the sand. I'm not certain if they think it's not applicable, or they believe it will be so long before it gets to them, that the individuals in charge will be gone. I liken it to ignoring global warming. Boxing should be very concerned because the analogies are frightening.

"... I think it is fabulous that studies are going on. However, I think that no one in the sport really understands how those studies will impact who is allowed to compete and who is told to retire. If it is any indication what the CTE studies are demonstrating, it is that it doesn't take much to eventually initiate the process of CTE. Even amateur fighters may be at significant risk.

"Time will tell."

NFL lawsuits could, too. ■



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WHAT WENT WRONG?

THE U.S. MEN'S TEAM FAILED TO WIN A MEDAL AND THE FUTURE LOOKS MURKY

By **Norm Frauenheim**

A noise meter at London's ExCeL Arena during the 2012 Olympics said volumes. It was louder for boxing than it was for Michael Phelps, or Usain Bolt, or Gabby Douglas, or any UK rock-and-roller during closing ceremonies. At a reported 113.7 decibels, it was the equivalent of a jet taking off at Heathrow, according to London officials, who by now have probably heard it all.

Much of what the roar said depended on the accent. For the Brits, there was the sound of pride in three gold medals that ruled the ring the way they used to rule the world. For the Irish, there was joy in a woman, gold medalist Katie Taylor, who might have been the biggest star in Olympic boxing.

For the American men, there was only anguish at an epic collapse in their first failure to win a

The expression on heavyweight **Michael Hunter's** face after he was eliminated by Russian **Artur Beterbiev** in the first round was shared by his U.S. teammates, none of whom medaled. Image: **Scott Heavey-Getty Images**

WINNERS & LOSERS

Image: **Jack Guez-AFP-Getty Images**

WINNERS

THE AMERICAN WOMEN
At the so-called Girl Games, the American women led the medal count with two – a gold and bronze. Russia and China also won two medals each but none were gold.

THE BRITS
It was a great show with daily sellouts at ExCeL Arena and noisy enthusiasm that reaffirmed the UK as one of the world's best boxing markets.

VASYL LOMACHENKO
The Ukrainian gold medalist at lightweight, a 2008 gold medalist at featherweight, looked like the best pro prospect.

KATIE TAYLOR
Erin go Bragh. The lightweight gold medalist captured Ireland Forever.

TEDDY ATLAS AND BOB PAPA
The NBC analysts got kicked out of ExCeL Arena for the last two days, in part for saying what their audience was thinking – that computer scoring is garbage.

medal of any stripe. For the American women, there was celebration in a gold medal for Claressa Shields, a bronze medal for Marlen Esparza and maybe some consolation amid all the condemnations for USA Boxing. For referees and keyboard punchers posing as judges, there was outrage. For Olympic boxing's ruling body (AIBA), there was suspicion.

Listen, and it sounds like boxing anywhere. The exhausting ride from anticipation to exhilaration to anger to controversy and back again is boxing's tone, be it an Olympic ring in London or a pro one in Las Vegas. It's a noisy place. But celebrate that noise. It's a loud statement that boxing isn't going away, despite its critics and in spite of itself.

The question is simply where it goes, what shape it takes, post-London. In 2012, it returned to its

Light heavyweight **Marcus Browne** (right) fell to Australian **Damien Hopper** in the first round. Image: **Scott Heavey-Getty Images**

Queensberry roots. In 2016, it travels to Rio de Janeiro, the Brazilian birthplace for mixed martial arts and the UFC rival for boxing fans. In London, boxing went home. In Rio, it will be in for some inevitable and perhaps uncomfortable comparisons to a national sport that isn't included in the Olympics.

In what was boxing's Transition Games, London provided a guide on what to dump, what to keep, what to alter, what to grow and what to fear. Let's start with the American men, who at some point between preliminary bouts and quarterfinals were subjected to all of the aforementioned questions.

Attention on their failure to medal for the first time in modern Olympic history was heightened by a couple of things. There's history, now an infamous chapter in the long decline of an American franchise. The American collapse also stood out, like an ugly weed, in an otherwise brilliant performance by U.S. swimmers, sprinters, gymnasts and NBA millionaires in their domination of the overall medal count. The American men lost nine of their last 10 bouts before they were finished five days before Britain's Anthony Joshua won superheavyweight gold in an Aug. 12 finale, the 272nd OIympic bout.

Who to blame? USA Boxing is in the crosshairs, for a variety of missteps, including a late coaching change. Joe Zanders was dismissed about six months ago, reportedly because American struggles at the 2011 World Championships and Pan American Games resulted in budget cuts from the United States Olympic Committee (USOC).

Basheer Abdullah, coach of the 2004 team that included gold medalist Andre Ward, was hired in June. Abdullah wasn't allowed in a corner, either because he had been credentialed too late or he had worked with a pro. Meanwhile, trainer Freddie Roach had offered his Hall of Fame help, free of charge. But Roach's role was never fully explained to him or anybody else. In the end, Roach wasn't in London, which in hindsight might make him the only winner among the American men.

Amid the confusion and signs of bureaucratic infighting, the nine young Americans, who had to do the real fighting, were forgotten, cast adrift.

Changes were promised, if not threatened, by USOC chief executive officer Scott Blackmun during a London news conference after welterweight Errol Spence was the last American eliminated in a quarterfinal bout.

"We're going to sit down and take a hard look at why we are where we are and make some changes," Blackmun said.

A medal, just one, would be nice.

A lot of changes have been suggested, including a permanent national coach instead of a revolving-door process that never allows young fighters to develop long-term trust with a competent corner man.

The biggest challenge facing USA Boxing, or whatever it's called after the USOC shifts its attention to its troublesome subsidiary, rests in the culture of America's best amateurs. The Olympics are no longer a priority for any number of reasons.

To wit: Jose Benavidez Jr. The 20-year-old junior-welterweight is an unbeaten prospect who signed with Top Rank as a 17-year-old. He might have been a star for the 2012 U.S. team. But he went pro, he says, because of a scoring system implemented in the wake of the 1988 scandal that robbed Roy Jones Jr. of gold. In London, the judging continued to consist of judges punching a keyboard to count blows.

"I had always been trained to fight like a pro," Benavidez said. "I never trained for that kind of scoring. I like to take more time, set up my punches. With that computer, you'd land two or three punches, but they wouldn't be scored. It was hard to understand."

It's the computer scoring that has severed the traditional relationship between an Olympic medal and a pro career. Gold launched Sugar Ray Leonard in 1976. But the computer system might have led to a different career path. Oscar De La Hoya, a 1992 gold medalist in the first Olympics with computer scoring, told THE RING in its August issue that he would have foregone the Olym-

WINNERS & LOSERS

AIBA President **Ching-Kuo Wu**. Image: **Javier Soriano-AFP-Getty Images**

LOSERS

USA BOXING
The ruling body had a hand in the mess with an inexcusable coaching shuffle that had to be a factor in the men's failure to win a single medal.

AIBA
There are ever more reasons to be suspicious of the international ruling body with its plans for a pro league, which included the signing of five Ukrainians (including Vasyl Lomachenko).

THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE
It's time for the IOC to act like a regulator – an amateur version of the Nevada State Athletic Commission – or else AIBA's growing conflicts of interest will include ownership of the boxers, judges and referees.

NBC
Thumbs up to the outspoken Atlas and Papa, but thumbs down to the way their bosses initially ignored gold medalists Nicola Adams, Katie Taylor and Claressa Shields in what was groundbreaking news.

ISHANGULY MERETNYYAZOV
The Turkmen ref was expelled. Nobody knows how he missed six knockdowns of an Azerbaijani fighter in the same round. Let's just hope that expel means a lifetime ban.

pics if he had been a young prospect in 2012 because of the system.

The good news is that amateur boxing plans to do away with the computer and go back to a 10-point must system. AIBA President Wu Ching-Kuo said in London that he expects that change, among others. An elimination of headgear is also a possibility. The bad news is that the 1988 scandal proves pro-style scorecards are just as subject to suspected corruption as the computer.

On the American side of the pond, fear of corruption in the amateurs is already baked into the cultural cake. Rafael Valenzuela, a Phoenix featherweight, was a terrific amateur when he fought for the U.S. in the 2003 World Championships in Thailand. While sitting in a room waiting to fight, he said a Cuban asked why the Americans even bothered to compete internationally.

'You're going to get screwed,' Valenzuela said the Cuban told him before he lost, returned home and soon went pro.

The whiff of corruption has been there since the infamous Jones theft at the Seoul Olympics. It was there again in London when a referee was expelled for not ruling a knockdown during a single round when a boxer from Azerbaijan was down six times. Outrage morphed into conspiracy theory when the Azerbaijani bantamweight was declared the winner in a result that was quickly overturned. Another referee was suspended for five days for an early disqualification. In all, 12 protests were filed. Two were accepted.

The Azerbaijani connection gave new life to a BBC story in September that Azerbaijan had paid between $9 million and $10 million to AIBA in return for two gold medals in London. AIBA has threatened to sue for libel. For the record, no Azerbaijani boxer won gold or even reached the gold-medal round. Azerbaijan won two bronze medals — heavyweight Teymur Mammadov and superheavy Magomedrasul Medzhidov.

Welterweight **Errol Spence**, initially devastated after defeat, won his second-round fight on a protest but lost in the next round. He was the only American to reach the quarterfinals. Image: **Jack Guez-AFP-Getty Images**

But suspicion lingers, in part because of an AIBA step toward the pros. Wu Ching-Kuo announced before the medal rounds in London that he had signed Ukrainian lightweight gold medalist Vasyl Lomachenko to a contract with a pro venture aligned with AIBA.

Four of Lomachenko's Ukrainian teammates — light welterweight silver medalist Denys Berinchyk, heavyweight gold medalist Oleksandr Usyk, welterweight bronze medalist Taras Shelestyuk and light heavyweight bronze medalist Oleksandr Gvozdyk — also signed with AIBA Professional Boxing (APB), a league concept scheduled to begin in 2013.

Wu Ching-Kuo said the deal will allow fighters to collect money while retaining their eligibility for the Rio Games. AIBA wants to reserve 56 Olympic spots for the boxers it signs.

But what about the boxers it doesn't sign? The AIBA plan for its own pros creates further suspicions about referees and judges, presumably also under AIBA control. Wouldn't the judges be predisposed to favor the fighters who work for the same organization? Dumb question.

Bob Arum couldn't get away with that in Las Vegas. It's hard to imagine that AIBA will be able to pull it off four years from now in Rio. There'd be too much noise in opposition. ■

Claressa Shields (right, facing **Nadezda Torlopova** in the final) wanted the gold medal badly. Image: **Scott Heavey-Getty Images**

GOLDEN GIRL

17-YEAR-OLD CLARESSA SHIELDS IS BOTH OLYMPIC CHAMPION AND PIONEER

By **Norm Frauenheim**

Claressa Shields wasn't supposed to be a fighter. What girl was, 17 years ago? Even 23 years after Title IX, dads didn't give their daughters boxing gloves for Christmas.

There was just too much to overcome. Too much to fight. Life within the ropes belonged to men. Christy Martin fought to change that perception and did for a while with a fight that landed her on a *Sports Illustrated* cover in 1996. But it was a rare moment — almost an oddity, unlike the game-changing fight that Shields waged and won in London.

Nothing like an Olympic gold medal to change perceptions. Win one, and you are celebrated. Win one of the first ones, and you gain a stamp of approval that includes life as a role model which other young women might follow in a parade that takes them up those steps and through the ropes.

"I was able to do a lot of things that people don't see women doing," Fields said after she became America's first woman to win Olympic gold in boxing with a 19-12 decision over Nadezda Torlopova of Russia at the London Games.

Fields can remember when her dad, Clarence, ordered her not to fight. But in Flint, Mich., there's not much choice. The fight to survive in tough times became a necessity, then a pastime, eventually a discipline and now an Olympic gold medal for Shields, whose stubborn

aggressiveness and consistent combinations were too much for anybody she faced in London.

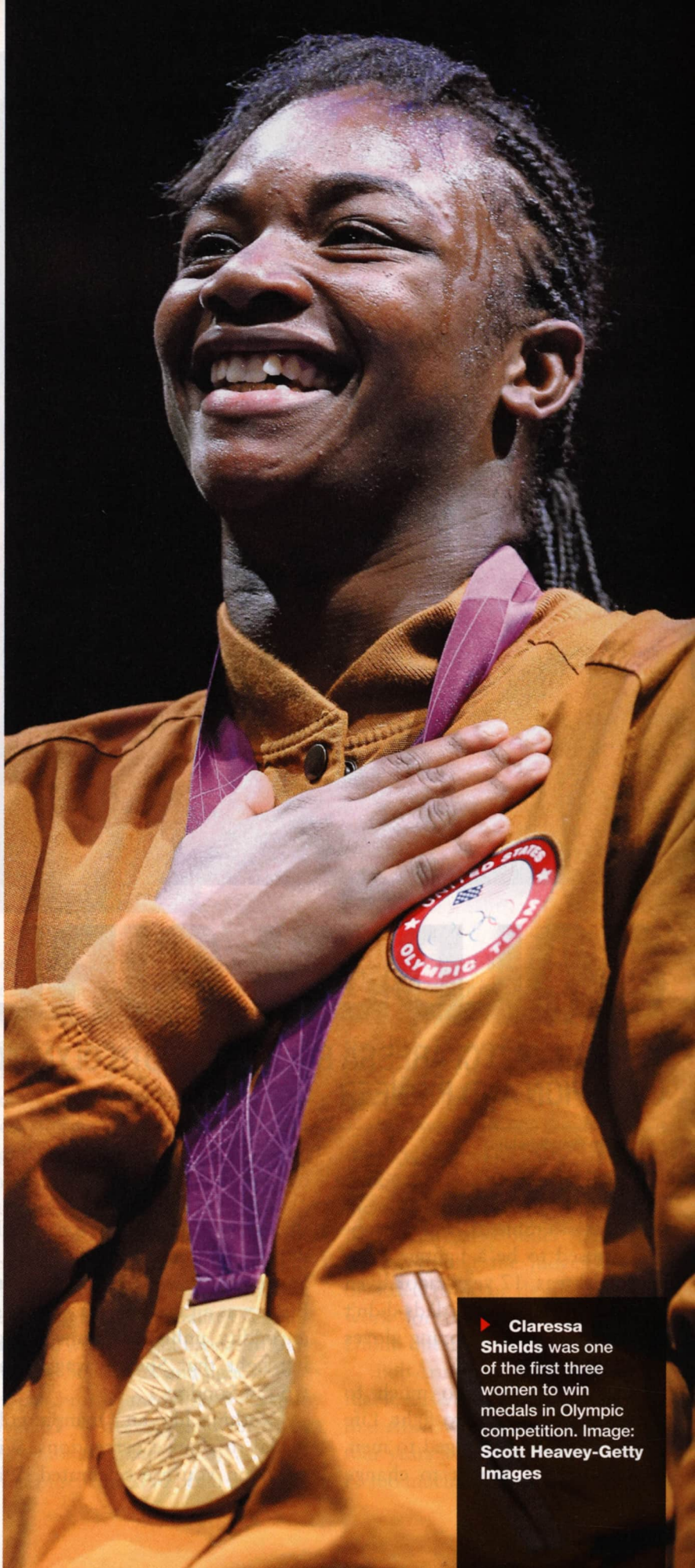
In the end, Shields brought some gold home to Flint and its heritage for great athletes. It is home to Chris Byrd, a 1992 Olympic silver medalist at middleweight who held a heavyweight title for a brief stretch. Former NFL receiver Andre Rison grew up in Flint. Running back Mark Ingram played high school football in Flint before he won the Heisman Trophy at Alabama. Glen Rice played prep basketball in Flint before going on to an NBA career. And, then there were the Flintstones — Mateen Cleaves, Morris Peterson and Charlie Bell — who led Michigan State to the NCAA basketball championship in 2000.

Another Flintstone, a woman with Olympic boxing gold, adds to the legacy in unique way, but one that wasn't a huge surprise to anybody who had watched her.

Gloria Peek, a member of the USA coaching staff in London, noticed it immediately in Shields and her teammate, flyweight bronze medalist Marlen Esparza, of Houston.

"I think they're revitalizing the amateur boxing for the men," Peek told reporters in London after Shields' victory. "You've got women coming into the sport. They have to play catch-up. They don't have all those years of experience. So they're willing to work harder and put in more time. So there's a lot more hunger, a lot more tenacity."

A lot more flint. ■



Claressa Shields was one of the first three women to win medals in Olympic competition. Image: **Scott Heavey-Getty Images**

Luke Campbell was one of three British fighters to win gold medals in the London Games. Image: **Scott Heavey-Getty Images**

HOME COOKING

BRITAIN HAD A MAJOR MEDAL HAUL. HERE'S WHY.

By **Gavin Evans**

Britain has emerged as the top Olympic boxing nation, with a tally of three gold medals, a silver and a bronze. And Ireland is not far behind with one gold, one silver and one bronze.

The British and Irish medalists are now national celebrities — watched in action by tens of millions of people, their names known to just about every citizen of the country. And not just super-heavyweight gold medalist Anthony Joshua (whose picture was on the front and back pages of just about every British paper). Katie Taylor literally stopped traffic throughout Ireland, north and south, when she won the lightweight gold, while Britain's Nicola Adams has become a national treasure, thanks to her infectious smile and bubbly nature as much as her quick fists and Ali shuffle.

So how did it happen? How did Britain go from one silver in 2004 to one gold and two bronzes in 2008 to this year's unprecedented haul?

There are three answers. First, state funding to the tune of £9.55 million ($15 million) from 2009 to 2013, through the National Lottery. This allowed the British Amateur Boxing Association to hire the best coaches and other specialists (including Performance Director Rob McCracken, who doubles as trainer to Carl Froch) and to base their elite at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield. It also allowed them to fund the amateur boxing elite, including the Olympic squad, so that they are, in effect, full-time professionals.

Second, success breeds success. The medals won by Audley Harrison in 2000 and Amir Khan in

Anthony Joshua (left, against **Zhilei Zhang** of China) became the second boxer from Great Britain to win the super heavyweight gold medal. **Audley Harrison** won gold in 2000. Image: **Scott Heavey-Getty Images**

2004 fueled a revival of amateur boxing. Today there are more boxers, more clubs, more coaches and therefore a wider pool of talent.

Third, the home advantage and the roar of the 9,500 highly partisan English and Irish punters who daily packed London's ExCeL Arena to watch the Olympic boxing had an impact on easily-swayed Olympic judges (though not to the extent as boxers from Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, who seemed to enjoy 'favored nation' status).

The 6-foot-6, 231-pound Joshua was the first to benefit. In only his 41st amateur bout, the 22-year-old was outboxed by quick-handed Erislandy Savon of Cuba in his opening bout. Joshua landed some meaty blows but most of the time he was flummoxed, waiting too long to pull the trigger, while Savon (nephew of Felix) raked him with rapid-fire combinations. The result was a dubious 17-16 win for the homeboy. If they'd recognized one more punch from Savon, he would have won on countback (when they add up the total of all five judges' scores).

The following day, in his second bout, lively British middleweight Anthony Ogogo went up against the world champion and No. 1 seed Ievgen Khytrov, of Ukraine. Ogogo won the opening round with frenetic combination punching but took two standing counts in losing the second, while the third was even. The resulting 18-18 score seemed fair, but when the countback again produced a tie, the judges chose Ogogo, despite those standing counts.

Then it was the turn of the team captain, light welterweight Thomas Stalker, who was adjudged to be a 20-16 winner over India's Kumar Manoj even though he looked to have been

MEDAL STANDINGS

IN ORDER OF GOLD MEDALS WON				Total
Great Britain	3	1	1	5
Ukraine	2	1	2	5
Cuba	2	0	2	4
Russia	1	2	3	6
Ireland	1	1	2	4
Kazakhstan	1	1	2	4
China	1	1	1	3
Japan	1	0	1	2
U.S.	1	0	1	2

NOTE: INCLUDES BOTH MEN AND WOMEN

Meanwhile, Joshua won his next two impressively, dropping China's reigning Olympic silver medalist, Zhilei Zhang, before outpointing him, and then dominating the 6-foot-9 Kazakhstani, Ivan Dychko.

But in the gold medal bout, he again needed a bit of help. He was shading his opening round against Italy's reigning gold medalist, Roberto Camarelle, before he found himself well beaten. However, Stalker was not as fortunate in the quarterfinals against Mongolia's Munkh-Erdene Uranchimeg, losing 23-22.

Another to win a squeaker was the elusive 21-year-old Welsh welterweight southpaw Freddie Evans, who dominated the opening round against Canada's Custio Clayton but then fell asleep and clearly lost the next two rounds, leading to a 14-14 tie. Evans won when it went to countback and went on to win the silver medal. He has considerable talent, but he's exclusively a counter-puncher and tends to switch off at times.

Freddy Evans of Great Britain (right) lost to **Serik Sapiyev** of Kazakhstan in the welterweight gold-medal match. Image: **Jack Guez-AFP-Getty Images**

Anthony Joshua could follow in the footsteps of **Lennox Lewis**, who won gold for Canada in 1988 and went on to have a stellar pro career out of his native England. Image: **Jack Guez-AFP-Getty Images**

cornered and rocked with a series of hooks — and looked fortunate to be only one point down when the bell rang. He neglected his jab in the second and found himself three down going into the final round, which he won by going on the attack, dominating the messy exchanges. The end result of 18-18 seemed slightly favorable to Joshua, who won 55-53 on countback.

The only British male medalist to require no help from crowd-influenced judges was the slick and well-schooled 5-foot-9 bantamweight Luke Campbell, who clearly won all four of his bouts, getting better with each outing, and excelling in his well-deserved 13-10 gold-medal victory against Ireland's excellent John Joe Nevin.

Nevin's light flyweight compatriot, Paddy Barnes, won Olympic bronze for the second time, although he deserved the semi-final decision against AIBA darling Zou Shiming, of China, who edged it on countback after they tied 15-15.

Campbell was the best of the British men, but the star performer on the squad was the 29-year-old Adams, who won all of her bouts in fine style, including her knockdown-punctuated 17-6 victory over China's world champion, Cancan Ren.

So what's next for the medalists? To the disappointment of several promoters, Joshua has opted to remain an amateur for the time being. "It's honestly not going to be hard to resist," he said. "To leave something as great as the Great Britain set-up just because of money would be a big mistake. I want to go on to win the world and European titles and dominate in the amateurs."

This likeable Londoner has plenty of tasty assets aside from his size: he's extremely athletic and well-balanced, with impressive strength, a good punch and, so far, a firm jaw. But he neglects his jab, never throws combinations and he isn't busy enough. Another year as an amateur would do him good.

Evans and Ogogo (who both lost decisively in the medal rounds) may also remain amateurs, but the 24-year-old Campbell is likely to turn professional soon, and with a European gold medal, World silver and Olympic gold to his name, this elusive stylist has the experience to make rapid progress, starting at featherweight. ■

MEN

LIGHT FLYWEIGHT

- Shiming Zou, China
- Kaeo Pongprayoon, Thailand
- Paddy Barnes, Ireland, and David Ayrapetyan, Russia.

U.S. – No one qualified.

Comment: Is a pro debut at a Macao casino next? Zou, the first Olympic light-flyweight to win successive gold medals, hopes to awaken business once outlawed by Chairman Mao with Dino Duva as his promoter.

FLYWEIGHT

- Robeisy Ramirez, Cuba.
- Tugstsogt Nyambayar, Mongolia.
- Michael Conlan, Ireland, and Misha Aloian, Russia.

U.S. – Rau'shee Warren lost to Nordine Oubaali (France) 19-18 in second round. Had first-round bye.

Comment: The 18-year-old Ramirez was unseeded and unknown before opening ceremonies. Not anymore. With athleticism, speed and a willingness to fight in the closing moments, he had the look of a prospect.

BANTAMWEIGHT

- Luke Campbell, Great Britain.
- John Joe Nevin, Ireland.
- Sato Shimizu, Japan, and Lazaro Alvarez, Cuba.

U.S. – Joseph Diaz beat Pavlo Ishchenko (Ukraine) 19-9 in first round; lost to Lazaro Alvarez (Cuba) 21-15 in second round.

Comment: The echoes from the crowd chanting for Campbell in his stirring victory over Nevin in a British-Irish rivalry will be remembered for a long time. Think of Mexico-versus-Puerto Rico done in a British and Irish accent.

LIGHTWEIGHT

- Vasyl Lomachenko, Ukraine.
- Soonchul Han, South Korea.
- Toledo Lopez, Cuba, and Evaldas Petrauskas, Lithuania.

U.S. – Jose Ramirez beat Rachid Azzedine (France) 21-20 in first round; lost to Fazliddin Gaibnazarov (Uzbekistan) 15-11 in second round.

Comment: Lomachenko won gold at featherweight in 2008, moved to lightweight when feather was discontinued and won another gold. He's the best Ukrainian not named Klitschko.

LIGHT WELTERWEIGHT

- Roniel Iglesias, Cuba.
- Denys Berinchyk, Ukraine.
- Vincenzo Mangiacapre, Italy, and Munkh-Erdene Urenchimeg, Mongolia.

U.S. – Jamel Herring lost to Daniyar Yeleussinov (Kazakhstan) 19-9 in first round.

Comment: The cool, calm and slick Iglesias, considered a prospect before the Olympics, only heightened interest in whether he will try to make the risky jump from Cuba to the pros.

WELTERWEIGHT

- Serik Sapiyev, Kazakhstan.
- Fred Evans, Great Britain.
- Taras Shelestyuk, Ukraine, and Andrey Zamkovoy, Russia.

U.S. – Errol Spence beat Myke Ribeiro de Carvalho (Brazil) 16-10 in first round; beat Krishan Vikas (India) 15-13 in second round; lost to Andrey Zamkovoy 16-11 in quarterfinals.

Comment: Sapiyev, the Val Barker Award winner as the best Olympic boxer, is quicker, yet as rawboned tough as Vassiliy Jirov and Bakhtiyar Artayev, other Kazakhstanis to win the Barker for a nation that is a perennial Olympic contender.

MIDDLEWEIGHT

- Ryota Murata, Japan.
- Esquiva Falcao Florentino, Brazil.
- Anthony Ogogo, Great Britain, and Abbos Atoev, Uzbekistan.

U.S. – Terrell Gausha beat Andranik Hakobyan (Armenia) RSC in first round; lost to Vijender Singh (India) 16-15 in second round.

Comment: Murata, who works for a Tokyo university, did his homework. He was smart with precise punches and skillful defense in winning only the second boxing gold in Japanese history.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

- Egor Mekhontcev, Russia.
- Adilbek Niyazymbetov, Kazakhstan.
- Yamaguchi Falcao Florentino, Brazil, and Oleksandr Gvozdyk, Ukraine.

U.S. – Marcus Browne lost to Damien Hooper (Australia) 13-11 in first round.

Comment: Mekhontcev came down in weight, from heavyweight, and Russia is relieved that he did. His power was the difference in a victory for Russia's only gold.

HEAVYWEIGHT

- Oleksandr Usyk, Ukraine.
- Clemente Russo, Italy.
- Tervel Pulev, Bulgaria, and Teymur Mammadov, Azerbaijan.

U.S. – Michael Hunter lost to Artur Beterbiyev (Russia) 10-10 (decided by countback) in first round.

Comment: Usyk had advantages in reach, power and perhaps popularity over Russo, who was booed in an earlier bout at London's ExCeL Arena for holding that scored points only at the wrestling venue.

SUPER HEAVYWEIGHT

- Anthony Joshua, Great Britain.
- Roberto Cammarelle, Italy.
- Ivan Dychko, Kazakhstan, and Magomedrasul Medzhidov, Azerbaijan.

U.S. – Dominic Breazeale lost to Magomed Omarov (Russia) 19-8 in first round.

Comment: Joshua has agile feet, the upper body of an NFL defensive lineman and pro potential. But his biggest advantage was a hometown crowd in getting a so-called countback decision after the 18-18 score was announced. The judges couldn't count the cheers. But they heard them.

WOMEN

FLYWEIGHT

- Nicola Adams, Great Britain.
- Cancan Ren, China.
- Marlen Esparza, U.S., and Chungneijang Mery Kom Hmangte, India.

Comment: It was a first. Adams, Ren, Esparza and Hmangte are the first women to win medals in Olympic boxing.

LIGHTWEIGHT

- Katie Taylor, Ireland.
- Sofya Ochigava, Russia.
- Mavzuna Chorieva, Tajikistan, and Adriana Araujo, Brazil.

U.S. – Queen Underwood lost to Natasha Jonas (Great Britain) 21-13 in first round.

Comment: A round of Guinness, please. Boxing wouldn't be the same without the Irish men – and now a woman also.

MIDDLEWEIGHT

- Claressa Shields, U.S.
- Nadezda Torlopova, Russia.
- Marina Volnova, Kazakhstan, and Jinzi Li, China.

Comment: Shields' gold offset the worst performance ever by the U.S. men. Without her gold, there might be more talk about ending American involvement in Olympic boxing. She's a reason to continue.

SMASH HIT

WOMEN MAKE A STUNNING DEBUT IN THE LONDON GAMES

By **Gareth A Davies**

Katie Taylor of Ireland (celebrating her victory over **Sofya Ochigava** in the gold-medal match) was one of the great sensations of the London Games. Image: **Jack Guez-AFP-Getty Images**

The headline writers ended up dubbing London 2012 'the crying Games,' but nowhere was the chord for the XXXth Olympiad struck in more harmonic fashion than at the Boxing Hall.

The song reached fever pitch on Day 9 of the Games; remarkably, it belonged to 36 women.

Several of them became overnight stars when the inaugural women's Olympic tournament began. Mery Kom, Nicola Adams, Katie Taylor and Claressa Shields became iconic figures. I watched all but one of the 27 Olympic boxing sessions live. The atmosphere was riveting at every one of them.

The impact of the women's boxing was more startling than anyone could ever have imagined. On Day 10 of the Games, when Ireland's Katie Taylor fought Britain's Natasha Jonas in the lightweight quarterfinal match-up, the noise level was recorded at 113.7 decibels, the loudest out of any venue anywhere at the London Games. As noisy, they tell me, as a jet engine.

The atmosphere was akin to a Las Vegas superfight.

Taylor, widely considered the leading amateur on the planet in her sport, won many fans. Promoter Eddie Hearn told me afterward he could put Taylor, with the right opponent, in a stadium fight in Ireland with 60,000-80,000 spectators.

The venue was sold out day after day. The razzamatazz worked with ring walks to iconic sound tracks. Every session became an event.

For the crowds, there were interviews with notable boxers in the 30 minutes leading into sessions. Evander Holyfield, Amir Khan, Lennox Lewis, Barbara Buttrick, Richie Woodhall, Barry McGuigan, Audley Harrison, James DeGale were all there.

Gold medalist **Anthony Joshua** has talent, intelligence and the ability to connect with people, which could take him a long way. Image: **Scott Heavey-Getty Images**

They were interviewed ringside as the crowd was whipped up into fever pitch.

The men's tournament was top class. Yet it was saddening that for the first time in Olympic history, the American men's team returned home with not a single medal.

The American effort was rescued by Claressa Shields, a 17-year-old from Flint, Mich., who became a star after Britain's world-no. 1 Savannah Marshall was eliminated in a shock defeat at the quarterfinal stage.

Perhaps the USA could learn from Great Britain's set-up, which had received an injection of $13.5 million from UK Sport — the body which administers elite-level funding to all Olympic sports — from 2009 onward.

A large squad of potential podium boxers benefitted from an alliance of professional boxing expertise and sports science. The yield for Britain was three gold, one silver and one bronze medal, which put them at the head of the medal table. Staying there will be a monumental task.

The set-up's success was highlighted when superheavyweight gold medalist Anthony Joshua explained that he is unlikely to join the professional ranks any time soon. He'll stay amateur, he said.

Admittedly, Joshua is a neophyte to boxing, and yet time was when a gold medal at the Olympic Games was an unbridled invitation to the paid ranks with a suitcase stuffed with dollars.

That landscape has changed dramatically, though, reckoned promoter Eddie Hearn, who has on his books Carl Froch, Kell Brook and others. Hearn was there one night in the Boxing Hall. He told me: "The days of the Audley Harrisons turning pro on the promise of a million quid are over. The market isn't there for that any more. But there are clearly boxers in this team who the public are going to be interested in."

For me, the great thing about big Anthony Joshua is that he has the charisma of a young Frank Bruno, talks with the wisdom of Lennox Lewis, and unlike Audley Harrison, he can actually fight.

Britain's boxing medals were not earned by chance. Hard-nosed sports science at Sheffield's English Institute for Sport had combined with the traditional spit, sweat and sawdust of the gym. That alliance of muscularity and mentality meant the team that reached the London Games was a more 'professional' set-up than many boxers in the paid ranks are today.

The result was the best performance by the host nation in over a century.

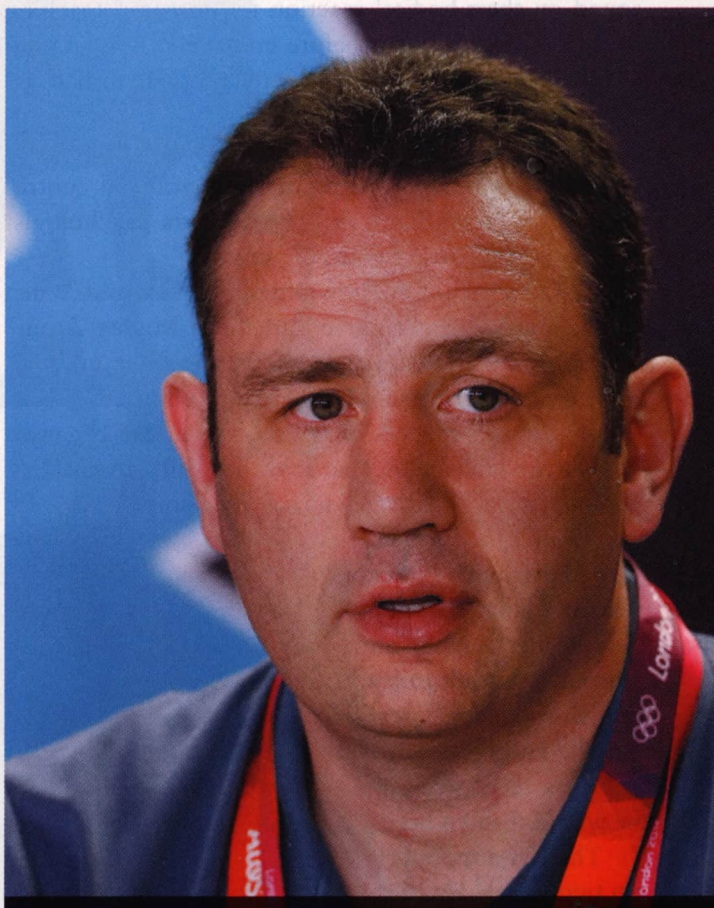
Eleven Sports Scientists had worked around the clock to create improvements designed to bring home the lucre. Under Rob McCracken's guidance it was a detailed plan. Making weight was made easy. Mark Ellison, a freelance nutritionist who also works with Manchester United Football Club, devised a program of meals for the boxers, delivered to them day-in, day-out for two years, which put them on weight.

McCracken talked early in the Games of the morale boost of seeing "a boxer from Cuba running in the morning with a sweat suit on, or heading to the sauna to try and cut weight" as the GB team headed to the food hall for breakfast, accompanied, of course, by a nutritionist who was selecting the intake.

One strength and conditioning coach, Ian Gatt, devised a strength and conditioning program for the squad's wrists and wrapped every boxer's hands for every bout during the Games. Hand injuries were reduced by 15 percent.

In 2010, Gatt had found the wrist strength of squad members was "about 50 percent less than the general population." Remarkable, really. But he changed that, eliminating micro-injuries.

Elsewhere, a performance analysis team had recorded 13,000 video clips of opponents. In two years, results are 50 percent better following analysis and a game plan for every bout.



Trainer **Rob McCracken**, Performance Director of the British team, oversaw a scientific plan that made it easy for the boxers to make weight. Image: **Streeter Lecka-Getty Images**

Mery Kom of India, a bronze medalist, was among the most-popular boxers because of her back story and passion. Image: **Jack Guez-AFP-Getty Images**

Two sports psychologists had also educated the squad on their bodies' reaction to "threats," teaching them to recognize signs before bouts, and how to control any anxiety. The boxers were then able to harness the power of home support.

"Threat trumps everything. If you recognize early that your heart rate is going up, and you can control it, that's empowering," explained sports psychologist Peter Lindsay. Little things. Big impact.

No lecture, this, but how times have changed. When the women's tournament began, "The Mighty Atom" Barbara Buttrick, all 4 feet, 11 inches of her, now 82, took her place ringside. Buttrick was pilloried in Britain by the newspapers of the day when she began to box in the late 1940s. She took her skills to the U.S. and became a legendary figure in the sport.

"They called me all kinds of things in the newspapers in England – 'unladylike,' 'disgusting.' Great to be here at a landmark moment," Buttrick said.

Another mighty atom, Mery Kom of India, also starred. She wept in front of the media in London several times giving interviews after her first bout. Now 29, she had hidden her love for boxing from her parents as a teenager — but mostly her father — for fear he would disown her.

The five-time world champion — who had come up two weight divisions to make the tournament, and whose style in the ring is akin to that of an early Manny Pacquiao — had a great presence but was beaten by Britain's Nicola Adams in the flyweight semifinal. Adams went on to win the gold and become one of the darlings of the Games. I have given her the sobriquet of Smilin' Nicola Adams. I hope it sticks.

Bringing women's boxing into the Games will be one of the major legacies of Dr. Ching-Kuo Wu, president of the Amateur International Boxing Association (AIBA).

"After many years of development, the women have shown that they have the standard, the skills, fighting spirit and sportsmanship to be included in the Olympic movement," he told me.

"The future will be very bright. We have 196 National Federations overall who have boxing, and 120 of them now have women's programs. Many more will follow." On the flip side, given IOC quotas, that may mean less men's divisions in the future.

However, Dr. Wu still has issues with AIBA's complex scoring system. Given the convoluted set-up of five judges, and only the closest three counting, a clutch of close results appeared to go the wrong way.

China's Zou Shiming looked to have luck on his side winning his second successive light flyweight Olympic gold against Thailand's Kaeo Pongprayoon.

When GB middleweight Anthony Ogogo defeated world No. 1 Ievgen Khytrov after a draw on countback 52-52, a group of four journalists hounded AIBA to release the exact system of calculating and computing countback.

It was the first time AIBA has done this, and if "transparency" is Dr. Wu's watchword, this needs to be done more often.

Outside the women, the star to emerge from the Olympic tournament was Cuban flyweight Robeisy Ramirez Carrazana, still only 18. He looks quite brilliant, adapting effortlessly to every opponent. If life is a river, then his style is water.

His slick teammate Roniel Iglesias Sotolongo ended Cuba's eight-year gold medal drought 24 hours earlier with victory over Ukraine's Denys Berinchyk in the light welterweight final.

Ukrainian southpaw Vasyl Lomachenko retained his lightweight title, and had he not made it look so easy, he would probably been awarded the Val Barker Trophy. Instead, it went to Serik Sapiyev, the welterweight from Kazakhstan who comes forward indefatigably, yet is still a counterpuncher. He took gold and the Val Barker Trophy as his booty.

As a footnote, the Mongolians were great value, both as boxers and supporters.

Outstanding event, privilege to be there. ■

Gareth A Davies is Boxing Correspondent for *The Telegraph*, London.

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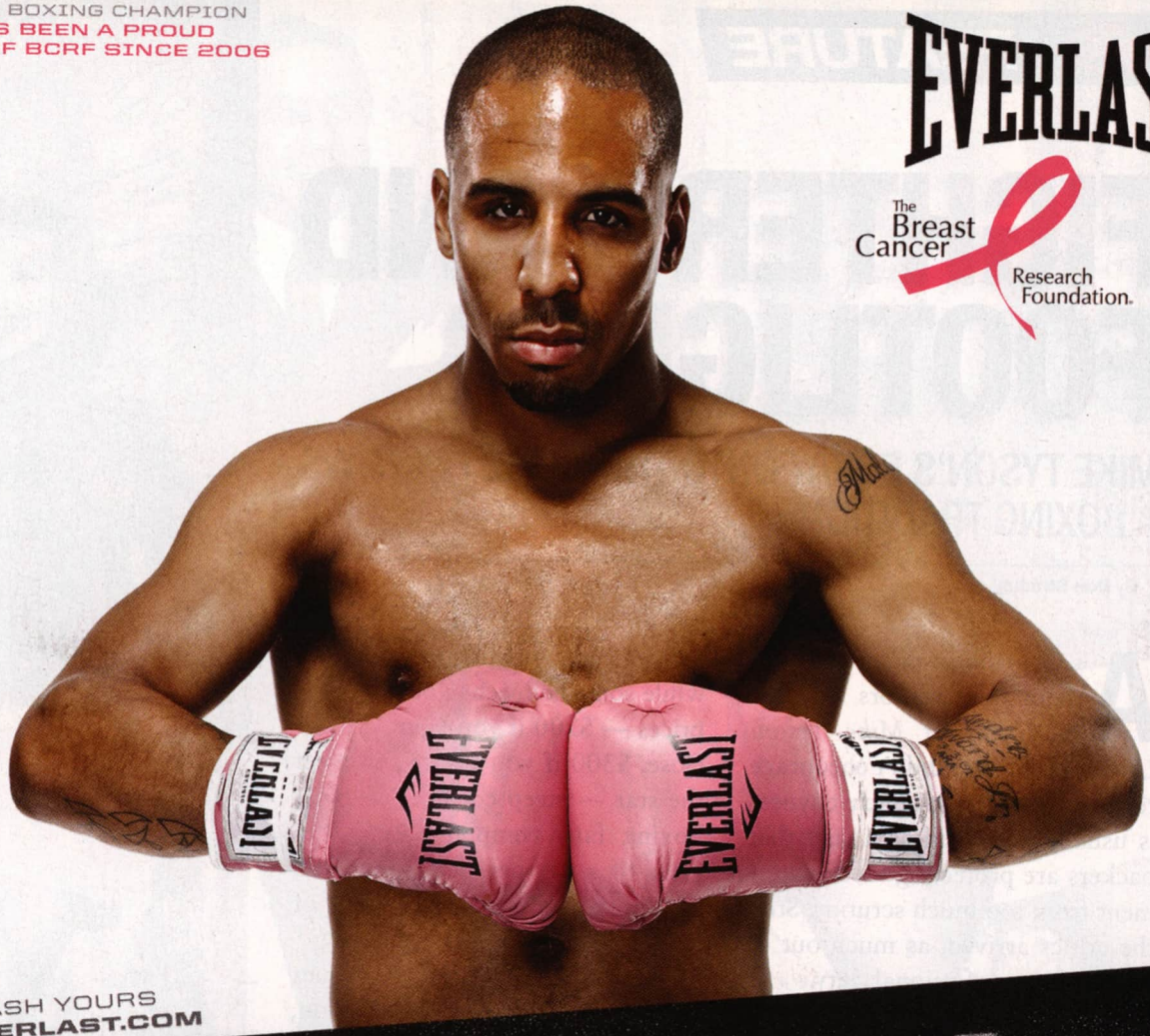

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FIGHTERS AND FOOTLIGHTS

MIKE TYSON'S FORAY ONTO THE STAGE FOLLOWS A BOXING TRADITION

By **Don Stradley**

As opening night neared, there were rumors that the producers of *Mike Tyson: Undisputed Truth* didn't encourage reviewers to attend. Such coyness is usually perceived as a sign that backers are protecting their investment from too much scrutiny. Still, the critics arrived, as much out of curiosity as professional duty.

The reception was mixed. Neil Genzlinger from *The New York Times* described Tyson's two-hour ramble as "a lazily structured biographical tour," delivered "with a clumsiness startling to see on a Broadway stage." Although Genzlinger dismissed the show as having "a few laughs but no real insights," he admitted Tyson was "surprisingly amusing." The *Daily News* acknowledged Tyson can "work an audience," but called the show "a copout, not a knockout." The *New York Post* was cheeky: "At least he finished on his feet."

Overall, though, the general consensus was that Tyson may not have been great, but he wasn't dull. Most producers would be happy with such notices, especially considering the cynicism that greeted the initial announcement that Tyson was booked for two weeks at the Longacre Theater. Some were miffed that a legitimate New York theater was hosting an ex-pug, while some bellyached about ticket prices — $200 if you wanted to sit close, $300 if you wanted to meet the star — steep considering most boxing fans complain about the price of a pay-per-view fight. Still, the show may end up as a kind of quirky short-term success.

Meanwhile, Tyson continues marketing his latest incarnation, that of the bad boy who has mellowed with age. If he is going to remain a sort of national joke, he will make money at it by becoming boxing's version of Ozzy Osbourne. It's a smart move. Tyson turned in funny cameos in the *Hangover* movies and was the subject of a critically acclaimed 2008 documentary, but seems to be bitten by the stage bug. He performed a version of *Undisputed Truth* in Las Vegas earlier this year, and has said there may be more theater work in his future. It's not hard to imagine him taking the show on the road to places like Philadelphia and Los Angeles, maybe even the United Kingdom. After all, he's following a tradition that reaches back to the bare knuckle era, that of the retired or broke fighter taking to the stage.

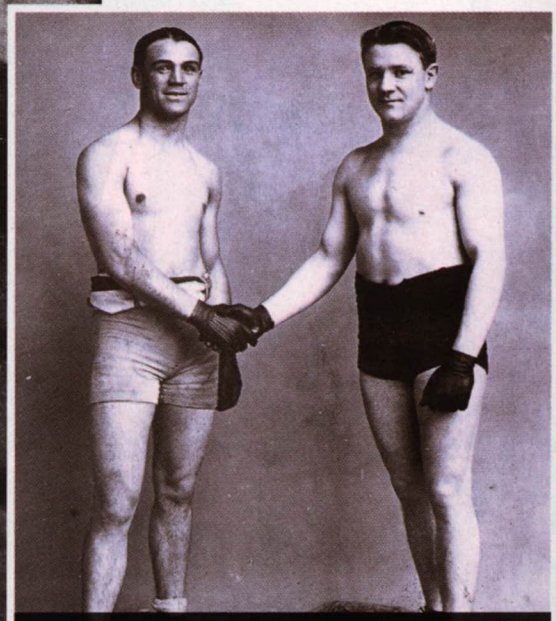
What is it about fighters and the footlights? Like no other athlete, fighters have been drawn to performing in theaters. We're not talking about B-movies or television; we're talking about the stage, with cues, lines to learn and an audience. Of course, the general belief is that fighters squander their money and simply need ways to get out of the red. It could also be that most fighters are city guys; they're born talking fast, ready to entertain. Besides, after experiencing the smoke and mirrors of boxing, where fighters create personas and often pretend to be what they are not, the stage may feel like familiar ground to them. As Tyson recently told the *Associated Press* about live performing, "Even though it's real, it's not real. It's an illusion." Whatever the reason, dozens of fighters have attempted to work in a theater setting, from the most elegant Broadway houses to the cramped caverns of vaudeville to the suburban dinner theater circuit. Sometimes the mere novelty of a boxer on a stage was enough to draw customers. But even Muhammad Ali learned that if your show flops, there isn't a rematch clause.

Producer Zef Bufman created some Broadway buzz during the 1968-69 season when he announced that Ali had signed to play the lead in a musical version of *Big Time Buck White*. Ali was battling the government over his refusal to accept military duty and hadn't boxed in over a year; appearing on Broadway was the best offer he'd

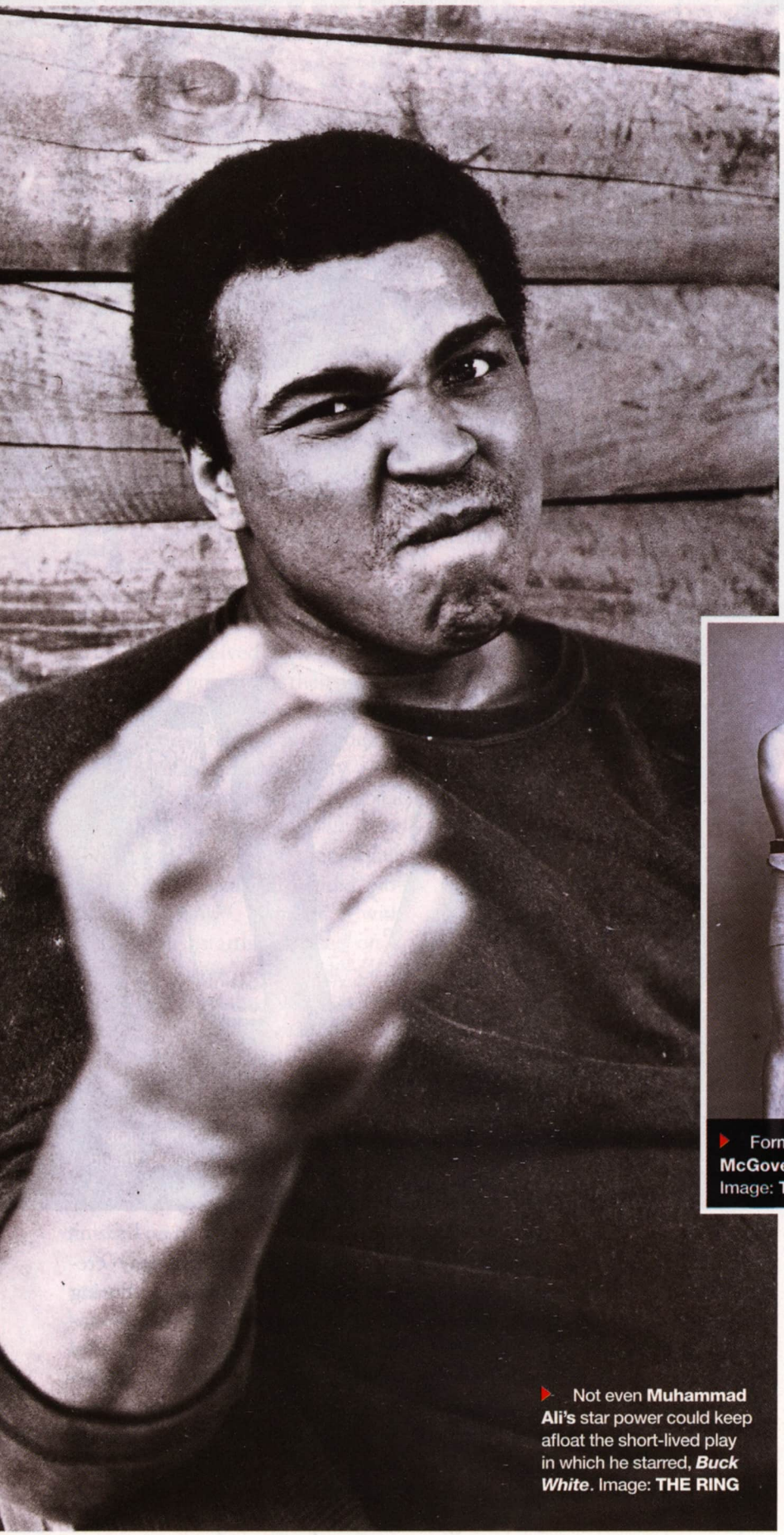
Max Baer's elaborate stage act included chorus girls with his initials emblazoned on their sweaters. Image: **THE RING**

had. Wearing a massive wig and beard, Ali opened in *Buck White* at the George Abbott Theater on Dec. 1, 1969. Unfortunately, the gimmick casting of Ali couldn't overcome the bad songs and the clichéd script. *Buck White* closed four days later, with the show's backers losing a quarter of a million dollars. Most agreed with critic William Sarmento, who described the show as "almost a total disaster. And for its star, Muhammad Ali-Cassius Clay, it is an embarrassment."

One of the few fighters to make a real killing on Broadway was Terry McGovern. "Terrible" Terry's manager was Sam Harris, who, like many fight managers in the 1900s, doubled as a theater producer. (Back then it wasn't unusual for a manager to handle a few fighters, a few actors, a juggler and a few chorus girls; it was all showbiz.) Realizing how beloved McGovern was among New York's Irish, Harris attached him to several dramatic productions. McGovern became so popular that his signature hairstyle — slicked down and parted in the middle —



Former featherweight champion **Terry McGovern** (left) found great success on Broadway. Image: **THE RING**



Not even **Muhammad Ali's** star power could keep afloat the short-lived play in which he starred, ***Buck White***. Image: **THE RING**

was copied by his admirers until Broadway was awash in McGovern look-alikes. Unfortunately, McGovern's overloaded performance schedule lead to the first of many nervous breakdowns he would suffer during his sad and complicated life.

Already veterans of film, Max Baer and Maxie Rosenbloom teamed up during the mid-1940s to create a stage act that poked fun at their punchy personas. Baer would introduce Rosenbloom as "The Noel Coward of the psychopathic ward," and then they were off, insulting each other, singing crude songs and arguing over who was the better fighter. It was just the sort of silliness that post-war audiences craved. Alan Ward of the *Oakland Tribune* declared Baer and Rosenbloom "darned good entertainers and crazy like a couple of foxes."

Baer and Rosenbloom worked the act for years, culminating with a successful engagement at Loew's State on Broadway, the biggest Loew's house in New York. But as New York gossip columnist Hy Gardner wrote in 1952, "It wasn't a pleasant relationship because of constant bickering." By the mid-1950s Rosenbloom was working with other partners, including Baer's brother, Buddy, and Sugar Ray Robinson.

Of all the fighters to flirt with show business, Robinson seemed most likely to succeed. Not only did Robinson cut a striking figure in top hat and tails, but he could sing a bit, tap dance and play the drums. In 1952 Robinson took an extended break from boxing and set up "The Sugar Ray Revue," aligning himself with other singers and dancers, including a 1954 stint with Count Basie and his 22-piece band. Biographers have dismissed Robinson's showbiz gamble as a flop, but he was actually successful for a while. Unfortunately, once the novelty of seeing Robinson in a tuxedo wore off, ticket sales dropped. Robinson retired his tap shoes and returned to the ring.

Sugar Ray Robinson left boxing to start "The Sugar Ray Review" but ultimately returned to the sport. Image: **THE RING**

Robinson's old rival Jake LaMotta told jokes in saloons and even had a turn in a New York production of *Guys & Dolls* back in the 1960s. LaMotta is still at it; just days before Tyson's show opened, LaMotta, 90, ended a two-week stretch at the tiny Richmond Shepard Theater on E. 26th St. He told the same jokes he told 50 years ago, while his fiancée Denise Baker sang a few songs. Under the headline "Aging Bull: Ouch!" The *New York Post* called the show "cringeworthy." LaMotta was unfazed, telling the *Times*, "It gives me something to do."

Not all fighters went on stage because they were destitute. During the early months of 1890, John L. Sullivan was at the zenith of his popularity when he was approached by producer Duncan B. Harrison. Harrison was trying to create interest in *The Paymaster*, a Broadway bust. Desperate to increase ticket sales, Harrison added a scene to the show that would feature Sullivan sparring for three rounds. Sullivan liked the idea. At age 32 he had grown tired of fighting and was looking for a way out. He recruited sparring mate Joe Lannon to help. While some considered the idea tasteless, Harrison's notion paid off. Within days, hundreds of

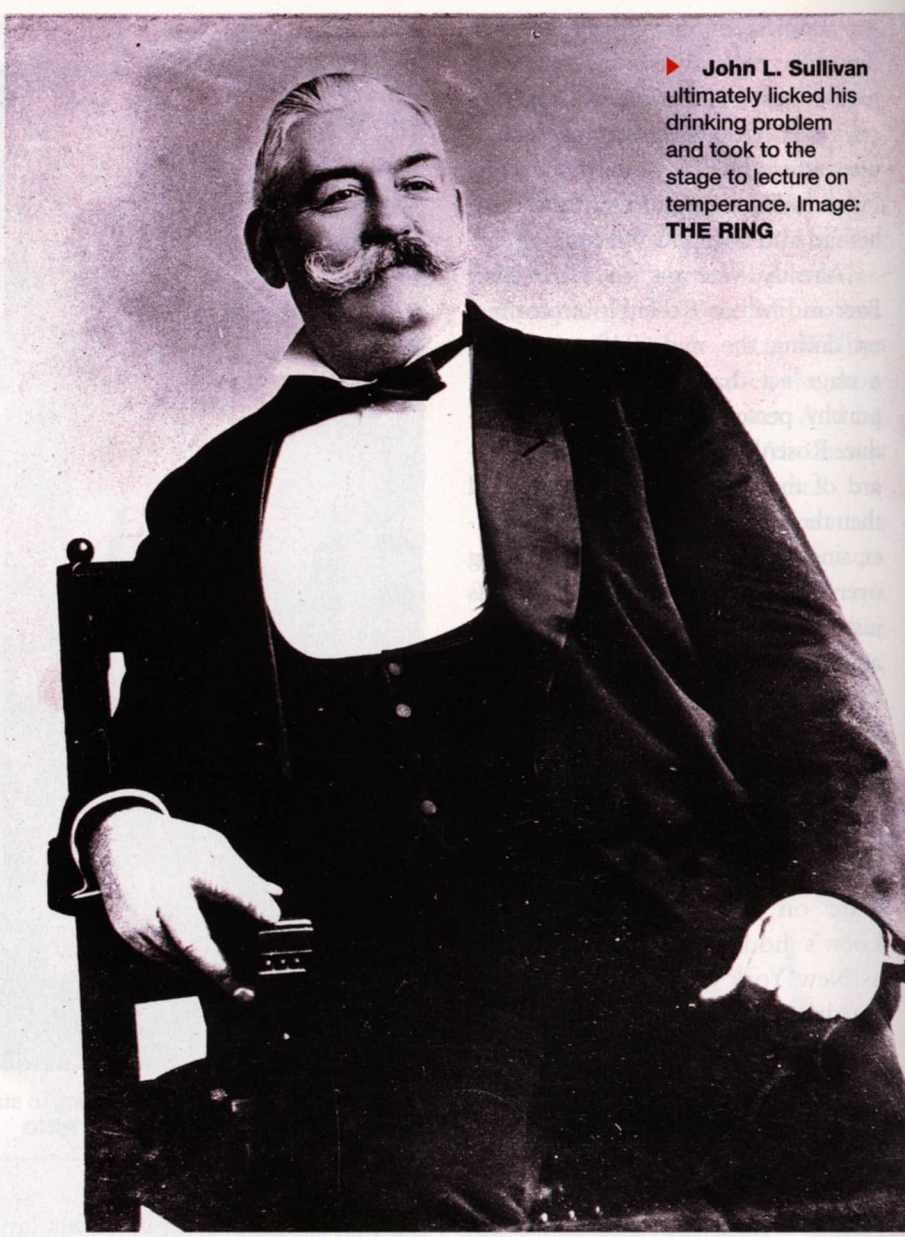
plug-uglies and street toughs were lining up at the box office, buying tickets to see Sullivan.

By August, Sullivan was starring as a heroic blacksmith in another Harrison spectacle, *Honest Hearts and Willing Hands*. Critics didn't know what to make of Sullivan as he slouched around the stage like an old-time Bowery tough. "His great shoulders were bent forward so that his mighty arms hung considerably in front of his body, permitting the dangerous hands to sag past his thighs," the *Decatur Sunday Morning Review* recounted. "He looked sullenly at the audience, and spoke the sentences without the slightest attempt for effect."

After a stand at Niblo's Theater in New York, the show pounded across the country, attracting audiences curious to see Sullivan in person. When the drama played the Howard Theater in Sullivan's hometown of Boston in November 1890, the *Boston Daily Globe* noted that Sullivan's mere entrance inspired a "tornado of cheers and applause." Harrison played Sullivan's antagonist until the climactic fight scene, when Lannon stepped in wearing a costume identical to Harrison's. "Here the champion looked really happy," reported the *Globe*. "The way he danced about and ducked his head to avoid Lannon's vicious blows was grace personified."

Despite his accomplishments on stage, Sullivan drank too much and was prone to angry fits. After a problematic tour of Australia, Sullivan returned to boxing, lost to James J. Corbett and finally retired from the ring. He returned to the theater, but his drinking habit remained a problem; he'd walk out in the middle of performances, and on more than one occasion he attacked members of the touring company. During one of these theatrical tours, a drunken Sullivan fell out of a hotel window.

Later in life, a sober Sullivan hit the boards to speak out against the ills of alcohol. He'd pepper these appearances with jokes, and sometimes brought old opponent Jake Kilrain along so they could spar a bit for the crowds. Mostly he talked about his victory over the bottle. Never billing himself as a "reformer," Sullivan was simply telling his story. The lecture, which varied in length and form over the years, was entitled *From Glory, to Gutter, to God*. Sullivan slogged through the United States and Canada with it for more than a decade. It would turn out to be one of the most lucrative undertakings of his life.



John L. Sullivan ultimately licked his drinking problem and took to the stage to lecture on temperance. Image: **THE RING**

"The footlights got me now as the ring did when I was in my prime," Sullivan explained to THE RING founder Nat Fleischer in 1910. "There is something about acting that gets into your blood, and if you're at all good, you can't give it up. That's the way I feel about the stage."

And so it may have been for Corbett, and Jack Johnson, and Mickey Walker, and so many other fighters who ventured into the theater. As for Tyson, he's standing where they all stood, and it sort of makes sense. ■

Did **Danny Garcia** (right) and his father use psychology to lure **Amir Khan** into a brawl? Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

A WELL LAID TRAP?

DANNY GARCIA'S TRASH-TALKING FATHER AND TRAINER, ANGEL, MIGHT'VE LURED AMIR KHAN INTO FIGHTING HIS SON'S FIGHT

By **Bernard Fernandez**

When you stop and think about it, all sports and games have certain shared characteristics. The purpose is to win, whether that end is achieved by physical superiority, strategic adaptability or outright subterfuge. So it isn't really that much of a stretch to suggest that boxing and the World Series of Poker are linked in ways that might at first escape scrutiny.

Recently, THE RING's new 140-pound champion, Danny "Swift" Garcia, unified two major titles with his fourth-round stoppage of Amir Khan on July 14, ripping punches that sent Khan to the canvas three times before referee Kenny Bayless stepped in and waved the contest off. But power and a commendable skill-set in and of themselves do not ensure victory inside the ropes. Garcia also talked a lot of smack — well, at least his father-trainer, Angel Garcia, did — which is the sort of gamesmanship that confuses or angers an opponent into making mistakes. A fighter who "gets into the other guy's head" causes the affronted party to deviate from a sound fight plan because of inflamed emotions. Ask Sugar Ray Leonard, Felix Trinidad or any number of others who ruefully have fallen into a chatty foe's carefully laid trap.

It should have been obvious to any of the 7,061 on-site spectators in Las Vegas' Mandalay Bay Events Center and a much larger HBO audience that Khan, a 6-1 favorite, had the height and reach advantages to score a points nod over Garcia. It certainly appeared as if that would be the case in the first two rounds, in which Khan scored well with crisp shots and opened a cut over Garcia's right eye. But it was just as obvious that Khan,

Angel Garcia, the father and trainer of **Danny Garcia**, irritated **Amir Khan** with his pre-fight jabbering. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

who repeatedly had been dismissed as "overrated" by the elder Garcia and to a somewhat lesser extent by his son, was intent on silencing his detractors by registering a take-that, zip-your-lips knockout.

At the final press conference three days before the fight, Khan responded to Angel Garcia's constant chirping by saying, "When I beat your son, will I still be overrated?" He also told reporters that "In the ring, I will hurt (Angel's) son."

Such comments had to please the Garcias, who live in Philadelphia — hometown of Bernard Hopkins, maybe the trash-talkingest, mind-games-playingest fighter since the heyday of Muhammad Ali — and have borne witness to the havoc that can be wreaked when verbal sticks and stones sometimes do, in fact, lead to the breaking of bones. The symbolism was inescapable as Hopkins, a Golden Boy Promotions executive, stood just behind Garcia smiling broadly while the newly crowned king was being interviewed after his impressive dispatching of Khan.

So, were Angel Garcia's nonstop putdowns rooted in the heartfelt belief that Khan's big reputation was the product of undeserved hype, or was it part of an orchestrated effort to make him just a little bit crazy?

"I think maybe a little bit of both," Danny Garcia said a few weeks after the most important victory of his career while on vacation with his family (including Angel) at Disney World. "My dad does have a tendency to speak his mind. But, you know, that's all right with me. He is who he is."

For his part, Angel insists that what he said was his honest opinion and not designed to give Danny any sort of mental advantage. "All I said was the truth," Angel said. "Some people don't like to hear the truth. The truth hurts sometimes. I said Khan don't have a chin, and he doesn't. But we all knew that going in, didn't we?

"Mentally, spiritually and physically, Danny was much too strong for Khan. He hits too hard. I never doubted it was just a matter of time before Danny would catch him and hurt him."

It will be interesting to see whether Danny Garcia's path moving forward is marked by the same sort of caustic rhetoric, at least from his father, that is so associated with Hopkins, Roberto Duran and Ali, who always seemed to know which buttons to push as well as which punches to throw. Danny (24-0, 15 knockouts) is tentatively scheduled to defend his belts on Oct. 20 at Barclays Center, the new home of the NBA's Brooklyn Nets, possibly in a rematch with Mexican legend Erik Morales (52-8, 36 KOs), against whom he won the vacant WBC title by a unanimous decision on March 24 in Houston.

But if not Morales, Garcia and his dad are open to fighting anyone, with the possible exception of

Khan, whom Angel said is undeserving of an immediate rematch.

"I'm a killer," Danny said less than a half-hour after he had separated Khan from his senses. "I'll fight anyone, anytime, anywhere." Angel agreed, but with a caveat: "Why should we give (Khan a rematch)?" he sneered. "He's like an old shoe. You know what you do with old shoes? You put them in a closet and forget about them. Why would we look at the past? We're moving forward."

Words have meaning, of course, but so does body language — the tics and twitches than can indicate more than most people realize. In poker, they're called "tells." The most adept players can read other players' tells, and they also know when to maintain a stony poker face and when to convey a false tell of their own, to fool someone who might be holding a better hand into making an unwise decision. The well-timed bluff can be as effective in the ring as it is for WSOP participants pondering whether to raise, call or fold. Some of boxing's greatest champions conceivably could have held their own sitting across a green felt-covered table from Amarillo Slim.

Ali might have been "The Greatest," but part of his dominance was the ability to mentally discombobulate opponents as well or better than anyone ever had. Everyone remembers how Ali, then known as Cassius Clay, planted a seed of doubt in the seemingly invincible Sonny Liston's mind with his frothing madman antics at shared public appearances leading up to the first of their two bouts. Hopkins got to Trinidad in a big way by twice throwing the Puerto Rican flag to the ground at press conferences. And Sugar Ray Leonard readily admits that he was thrown off course prior to his first meeting with Roberto Duran, who impugned Leonard's manhood. An infuriated Leonard then elected, somewhat foolishly, to try to beat Duran at his own roughhouse game, which of course is what Duran wanted in the first place.

"It affected me," Leonard said of Duran's nasty prefight sniping. "I was almost a rookie, in that way, compared to Duran. He took me for a ride into a bad neighborhood. I thought I had come from a bad neighborhood, but not that bad.

"A fighter has to stay composed and within himself, like a gym-

Danny Garcia didn't land all the big bombs he threw but one was enough to turn the tide in his favor. Image: **Jeff Gross-Getty Images**

This was the beginning of the end for **Amir Khan**, who had just taken a monstrous left from **Danny Garcia**. Image: **Jeff Gross-Getty Images**

devastating power, which always makes him a threat. I thought it was a great, great win for him. He was busted up a little bit, but he stayed calm and waited for his chance until he got it."

And the steady stream of derogatory remarks hurled at Khan by Team Garcia?

"I think Angel was trying to get Amir out of his game plan," Finkel said. "I don't know if that's what happened or not. Amir fought with his hands down too low, leaving himself open for the left hook to the ear that affected his sense of equilibrium. He never recovered from that first knockdown. I really don't think (the trash-talking) is what mattered. A good left hook is what mattered.

"You know, Danny is very polite, very mellow. It's not really his nature to talk bad about opponents. But Angel is in your face. That's his nature."

The fusion of mellow and melodramatic could put Danny Garcia, 24, in good stead as he continues

Referee **Kenny Bayless** ultimately decided to save **Amir Khan** from unnecessary punishment. Image: **Jeff Gross-Getty Images**

nast. How much concentration does it take for those little girls in the Olympics to do back flips on the balance beam? It's amazing to me how they're able to do that. A fighter who can maintain that kind of focus is going to be that much harder to beat.

"What Danny's Pops did was classic gamesmanship. The only person who really knows if it worked is Amir, and I don't think he'd admit it if it did. But that stuff does resonate. (The degree to which it is effective) is more prevalent than a lot of people realize. We're all human. I'd be lying if I said it didn't get into your head sometimes.

"But, of course, it also can come back to bite you on the ass."

Former boxing manager Shelly Finkel at various times piloted the careers of Evander Holyfield, Meldrick Taylor, Pernell Whitaker, Mark Breland and Mike Tyson, among others. He served as Danny Garcia's first manager after he turned pro, a role that since has fallen to Al Haymon.

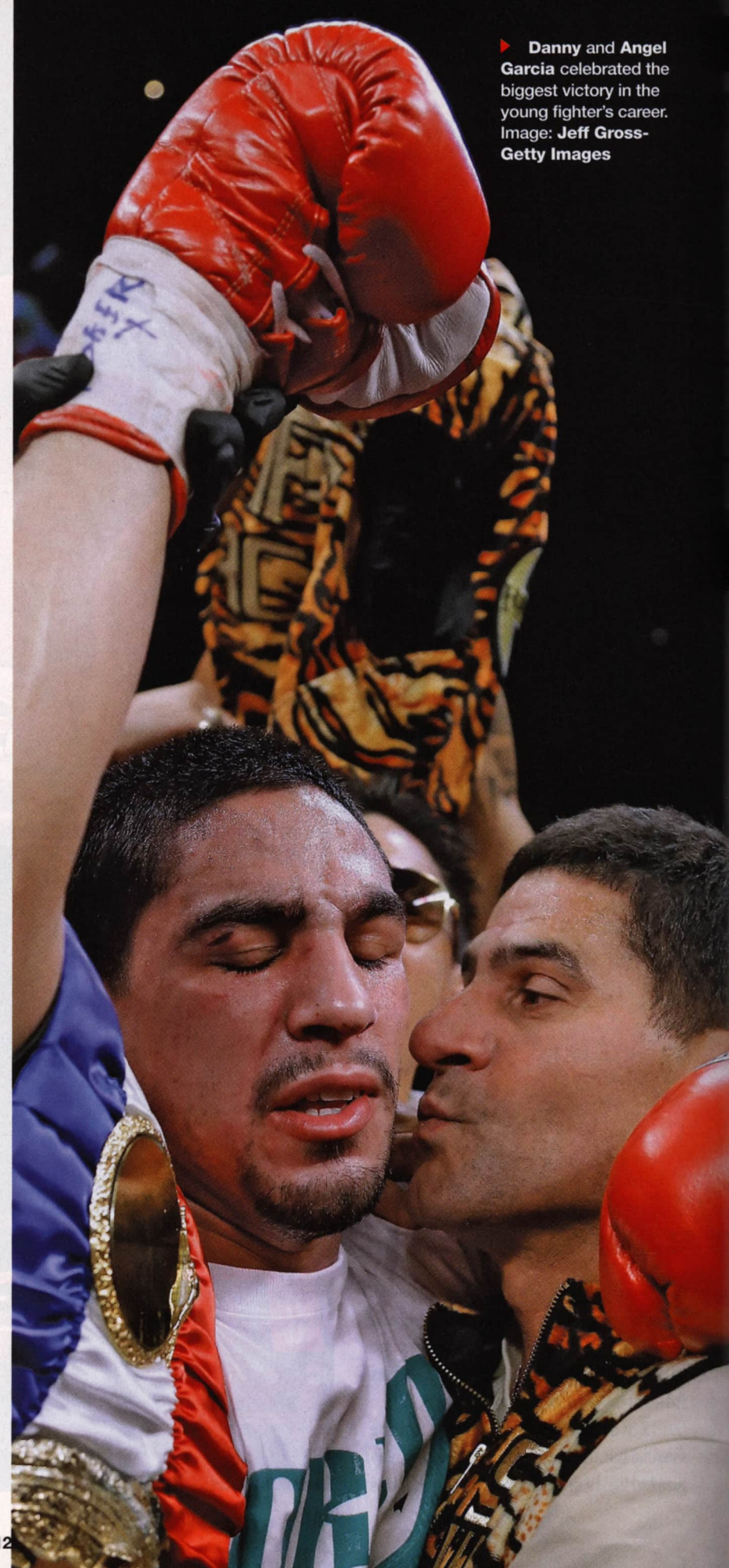
"I watched it," Finkel said of the Garcia-Khan fight. "I think Danny needed to box more early, but he has

his rapid rise from RING and alphabet titlist to possible superstar. Haymon, although a behind-the-scenes type, is best-known as the adviser to Floyd Mayweather Jr., whose reputation as perhaps the most talented fighter in the world isn't the only reason he is among the highest-grossing fighters of all time. "Money" can preen and boast with the best of them, having discovered years ago that it is as profitable to be everyone's favorite villain as everyone's favorite hero. It isn't likely Haymon will be instructing Angel Garcia to start complimenting Danny's upcoming rivals because it's always nice to be nice.

For his part, Angel seems content to assume the role of lightning rod while his son stays reasonably above the fray. Oh, sure, Danny speaks of becoming the best fighter in the world, portraying a certain conceit, but his words lack the bombast of a Hopkins or Duran — or of his dad, for that matter. Is it possible to be polite and mellow as well as a chest-thumping egotist? The Garcias seem intent on exploring both sides of that question even as they push all their chips to the center of the table.

"If Danny was walking down the street, he looks like you could take his money out of his pocket, like he was a little kid," Angel said. "He looks like a kid on his way to Sunday school. They underestimate him because of the way he looks, like a baby, like a little kid."

But looks can deceive, and so can remarks made — to the same telling effect as a left hook to the ear. In boxing or poker, the bottom line is always what counts the most. ■



Danny and **Angel Garcia** celebrated the biggest victory in the young fighter's career. Image: **Jeff Gross-Getty Images**

These are the judges' views of the same action from their traditional position (left) and elevated position during **Joe Cortez's** analysis to determine whether elevating judges would help limit bad decisions. Image: **Raymond Spencer**

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

REFEREE JOE CORTEZ HAS AN INSPIRED IDEA TO HELP AVOID CONTROVERSIAL DECISIONS: ELEVATE THE JUDGES

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Veteran referee Joe Cortez understands the frustration of fans who can't understand how judges arrive at some decisions, a glaring problem that has reached a crisis point in recent months.

The difference between Cortez and those who complain idly is that he believes he has a solution.

Cortez's novel concept — which he calls *Cortez 20/20* — is simple, yet one wonders whether it could revolutionize judging for both boxing and mixed martial arts: Elevate the judges.

The idea is to have the judges sit in the traditional position at ringside but on tall stools, with their heads about three feet higher than those of the fighters. You might compare it to a chair umpire in tennis.

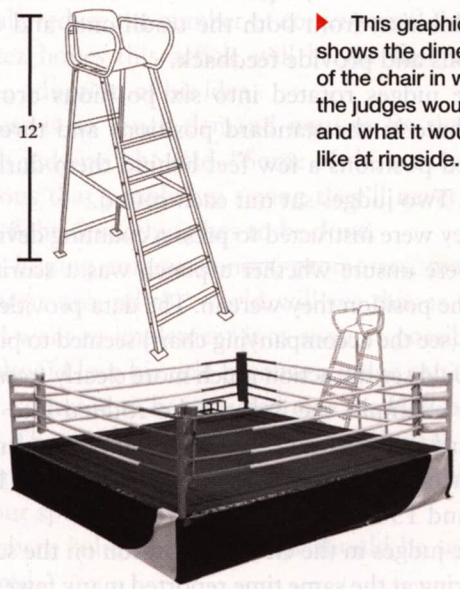
From that perch, the judges theoretically would have a better view of the action because obstacles — the ropes, the ref, sometimes bright lights — would no longer be a factor.

"I judged fights in the past," said Cortez, who was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2011. "I remember the lights bothered me, the ropes got in the way, the ref would walk in front of me. I remember thinking then, 'This isn't the best position for a judge.'

"Then, years later, I built a ring at my house. I do seminars there. I put in a balcony to get a better view and thought, 'This is a *much* better view.'"

Thus, Cortez decided the concept of elevating the judges was worth exploring. And he wanted to do it right.

Cortez decided the best way to determine whether his idea was practical was to conduct a analysis in his hometown of Las Vegas, for which he invited eight ex-



This graphic shows the dimensions of the chair in which the judges would sit and what it would look like at ringside.

Two more views of what the action looks like from the tradition position of the judges (left) and an elevated position (next page). Images: **Raymond Spencer**

perienced amateur judges to watch a four-round boxing exhibition from both the traditional and elevated positions and provide feedback.

The judges rotated into six positions around the ring, three in the standard positions and three in the elevated positions a few feet behind them during each round. Two judges sat out each round.

They were instructed to press a counting device when they were unsure whether a punch was a scoring blow from the position they were in. The data provided by the judges (see the accompanying chart) seemed to prove that they could see the action much more clearly from above.

For example, the judges who rotated into the first standard position indicated: They were unsure about 17 punches in the first round, 7 in the second, 16 in the third and 13 in the fourth.

The judges in the elevated position on the same side of the ring at the same time reported many fewer punches about which they were unsure: 1 in the first round, 2 in the second, 1 in the third and 1 in the fourth.

The experience was startling for the judges.

"At first I was a little skeptical," said Mark Weinberg, an amateur judge with more than nine years of experience. "That is until I got up there and saw the perspective from the elevated position compared to the normal position. It was like night and day. The old saying is 'you can't judge what you can't see.' It was never more true here.

"I find myself bobbing and weaving to get a clear view (in actual fights). The positioning of the boxers, the referee, sometimes the lights … all that comes into play. And there's the media and the hoopla surrounding the judges in professional fights, which also can cause a distraction.

"Being elevated up there, all by yourself, there are no distractions whatsoever. It's not perfect. I wouldn't say I saw 100 percent of the punches. I saw 98 percent, though. Did I walk away a believer? Big time."

Another judge who took part in the analysis had the same experience.

"I have to admit that I was a little skeptical when I first heard about the elevated judge idea," Tom Delahunty said. "However, that changed immediately after experiencing it firsthand. It was quite obvious to me that Joe Cortez was on to something.

As Weinberg said, elevating the judges isn't a perfect solution. Cortez acknowledges that.

One flaw would seem to be the tall chair itself (see the accompanying diagram). It obviously would obstruct the view of some spectators to some degree. To address that problem Cortez has enlisted a manufacturer to construct the chairs with transparent acrylic.

A perfect solution? Probably not. But it would hardly seem to be a deal killer.

Of course, Cortez hopes that the various commissions in the United States and beyond will agree that elevating judges will allow them to see the action more clearly and, as a result, reduce the number of controversial decisions.

Cortez hopes this article will be the first step toward the adoption of his idea.

"There is so much demand now to fix the problem with judging," he said. "Some of the scores are so outrageous that people are saying they'll never watch another fight. Something has to be done.

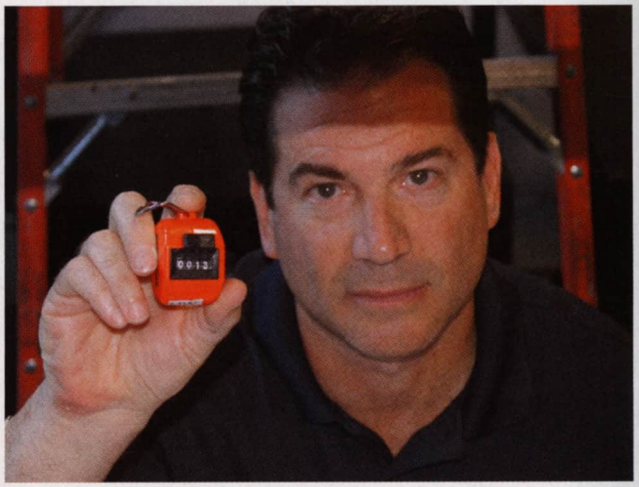
"I'm hoping commissioners, promoters, managers and fighters around the world will see this as a solution and want to implement it as soon as possible. No fighter should lose his title because a judge can't see.

"I was blessed to be inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2011. The sport has been good to me. I want to give something back. I want to help restore trust and integrity to our sport."

Weinberg believes this concept should be seriously considered.

"Joe isn't trying to change boxing," he said. "He's not trying to change the rules. He's trying to enhance the sport. The judges would have a better chance of not missing scoring blows. It isn't rocket science.

"Why is a lifeguard's chair elevated? Why is an umpire in tennis elevated? Because it's easier to see the action." ■



▶ (Left) This photo shows the positioning of the judges during **Joe Cortez's** analysis, one in the traditional position and one elevated. Image: **Teressa Ditomasso**

▶ (Above) Amateur judge **Mark Weinberg,** holding the counter he used during the analysis, said he could see punches much more clearly from an elevated position. Image: **Teressa Ditomasso**

THE NUMBERS

Referee Joe Cortez wanted to determine whether judges could see the action more clearly if their chairs were elevated. To do so, he had judges score a four-round exhibition from standard and elevated positions and provide feedback. The judges rotated into six positions — the three standard positions and three elevated positions a few feet behind them — so that six judges worked each round. Cortez had them press a counting device when they were unsure whether a punch was a scoring blow. Here are the figures from each position:

FROM STANDARD POSITION

Times judges in each position were unsure punch was scoring blow.

POSITION NO. 1
(A different judge sat here each round)

Rd. 1	17
Rd. 2	7
Rd. 3	16
Rd. 4	13

POSITION NO. 2

Rd. 1	11
Rd. 2	13
Rd. 3	17
Rd. 4	6

POSITION NO. 3

Rd. 1	18
Rd. 2	15
Rd. 3	19
Rd. 4	13

FROM ELEVATED POSITION

Times judges in each position were unsure punch was scoring blow.

POSITION NO. 1
(A different judge sat here each round)

Rd. 1	1
Rd. 2	2
Rd. 3	1
Rd. 4	1

POSITION NO. 2

Rd. 1	1
Rd. 2	1
Rd. 3	4
Rd. 4	1

POSITION NO. 3

Rd. 1	2
Rd. 2	1
Rd. 3	2
Rd. 4	1

PARTICIPANTS IN ANALYSIS

JUDGES
Experience in parentheses

Marcela Barron	(1 year)
Lesli Casal	(17 years)
Michael Chavez	(7 years)
Tom Delahunty	(4 years)
Jim O'Callaghan	(7 years)
Andy Spurlock	(3 years)
Eugene Wallace	(12 years)
Mark Weinberg	(9 years)

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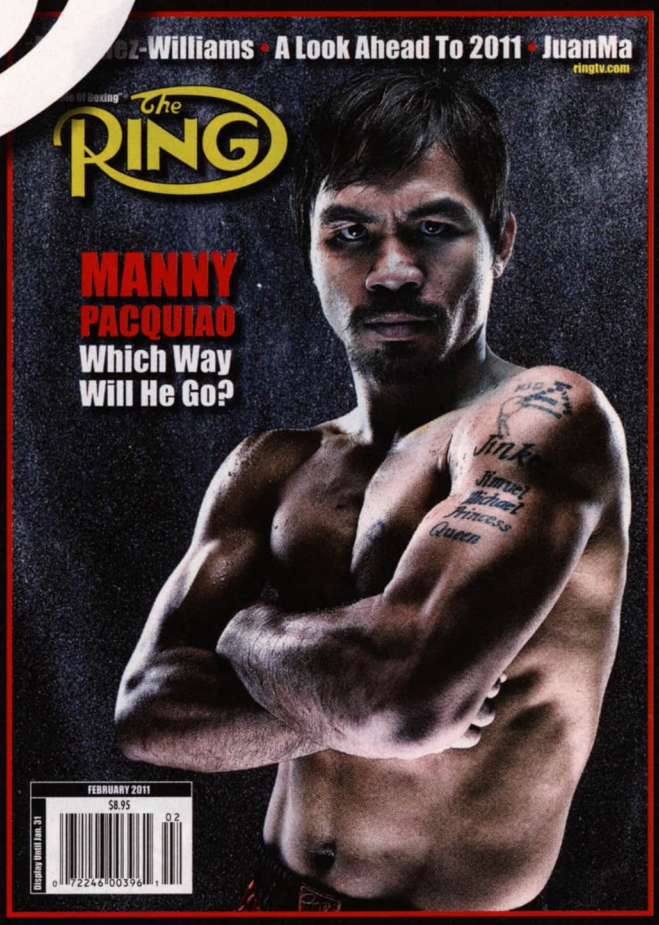

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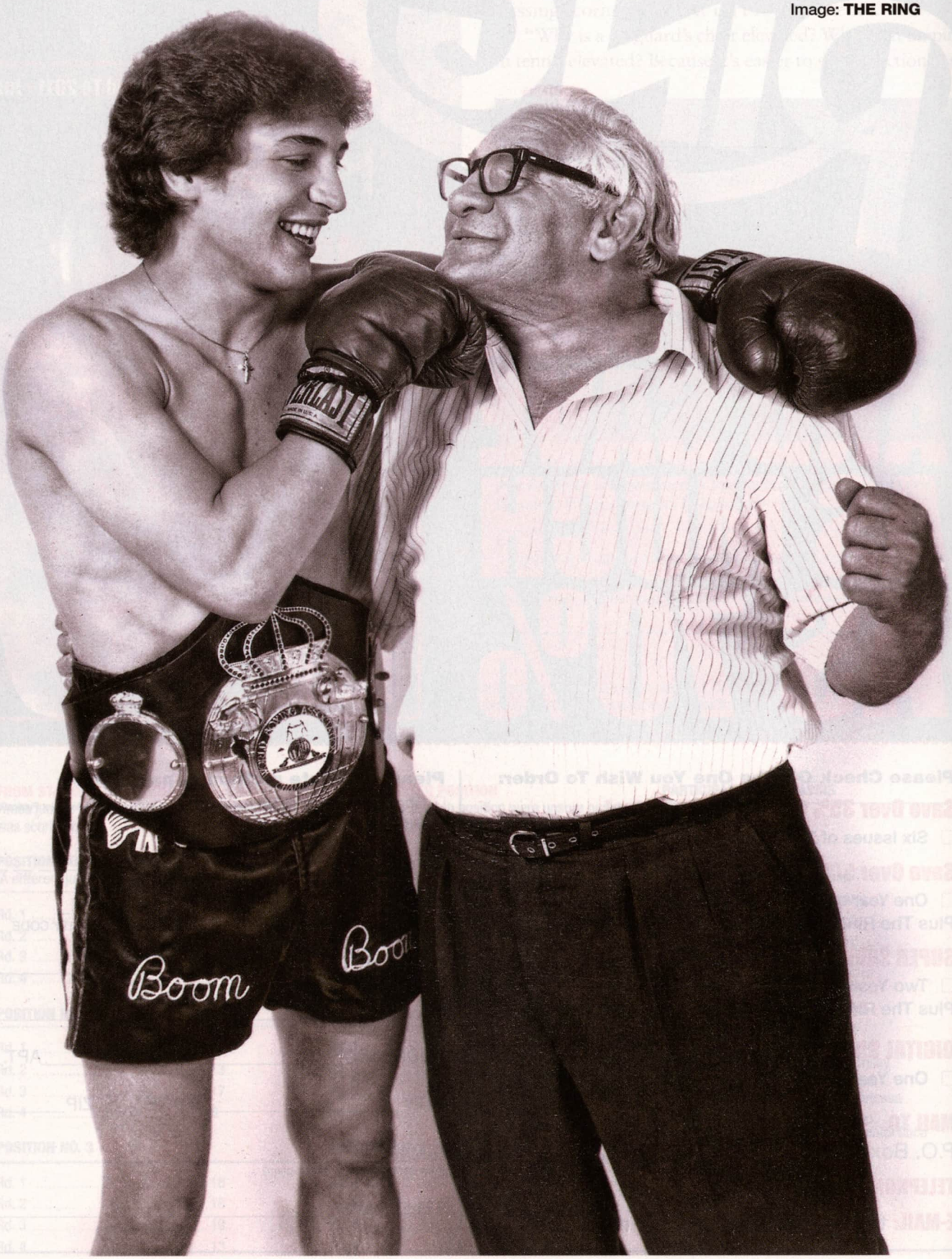
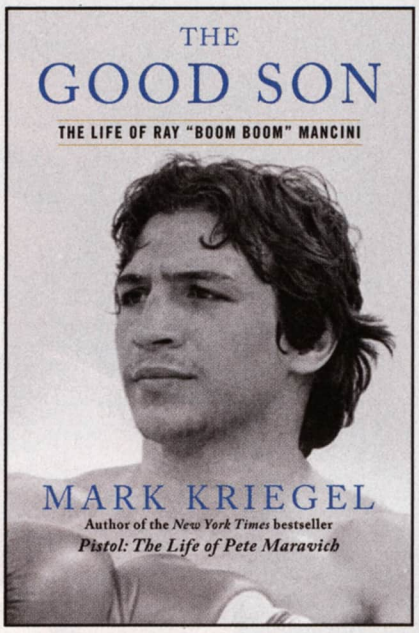


Lenny Mancini (right) was the inspiration for his son's rise to a world title. Image: **THE RING**

RAY MANCINI FOR REAL

By **Thomas Hauser**

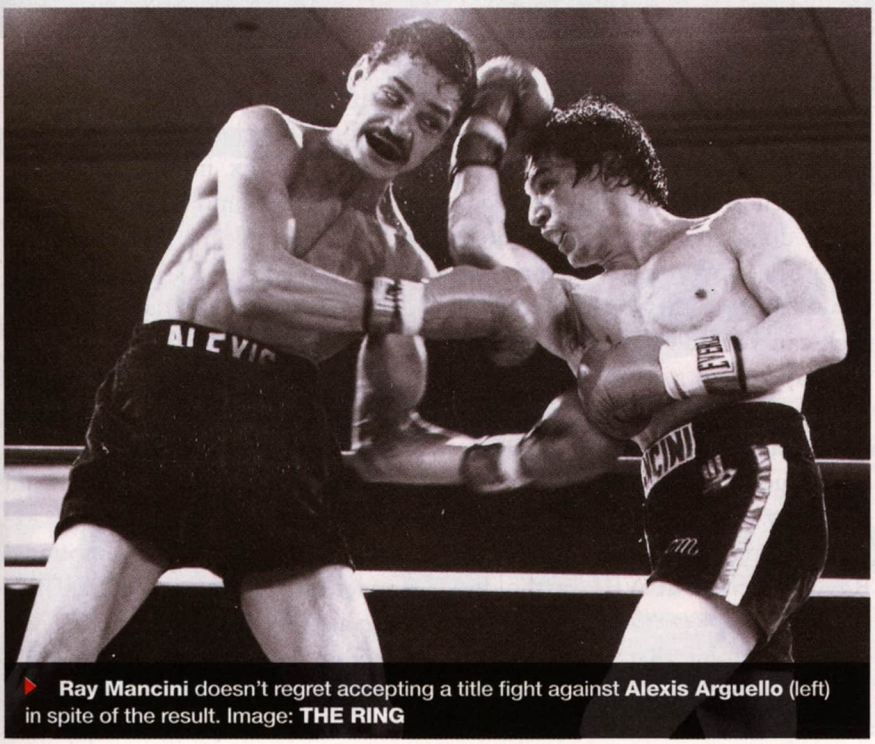


I started reading *The Good Son: The Life of Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini* by Mark Kriegel with a jaundiced eye. There are a lot of mediocre books about fighters who were embraced by the media and whose fame outweighed their ring accomplishments. But from the prologue on, it's clear that *The Good Son* is far more than a "golly gee" biography.

Ray Mancini was marketed to the American public as the All-American boy. Or as Top Rank publicist Irving Rudd proclaimed, "the All-American boy with a touch of mozzarella." He represented Youngstown, Ohio, to the United States the way Manny Pacquiao represents the Philippines to the world.

Mancini received what Kriegel calls "the highest blessing in American sports, that consecrating kiss of network television." In 1984, *Sport* magazine ranked him as the second-highest paid athlete on the planet in terms of performance income, ahead of superstars like Mike Schmidt and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. But Ray paid a heavy price before, during and after his glory years.

The Good Son begins with the story of Ray's father. Lenny Mancini turned pro in 1937 and was a promising lightweight. "He gave the fans what they wanted," Bill Gallo of the *New York Daily News* told Kriegel. "Kept throwing punches, never quit. He took a shellacking even when he won."



Ray Mancini doesn't regret accepting a title fight against **Alexis Arguello** (left) in spite of the result. Image: **THE RING**

Describing a post-fight photograph of Lenny at age 21, Kriegel observes, "His face is undergoing the inevitable inexorable transfiguration from puckish to pugilistic. Its supple features have begun to flatten and purple. His lips are bruised and split. A cut sack of swollen tissue hangs over his left eye. The right eye is completely closed, clenched like the seam of a mussel shell."

Lenny went into the Army after Pearl Harbor. He came out a physically broken man, who fought for four more years as a ticket-selling club fighter and, when the money was right, as an opponent. "He might have become the lightweight champion if he hadn't gone into the Army," legendary trainer Ray Arcel said in 1945. As Kriegel notes, "That was just another way of saying Lenny Mancini would never be a champion. He had the stink of 'what if?' about him."

The younger Mancini idolized his father. Looking at photographs in old scrapbooks, Kriegel recounts, "Raymond didn't see a club fighter with a busted eye and dried blood on his lips. He saw a hero. It might as well have been Christ on the cross."

Ray Mancini's career was in significant measure a tribute to his father. His journey through the sweet science was guided by two of the smartest men in boxing. Manager Dave Wolf was knowledgeable, tenacious, a pain in the ass to deal with and devoted to the best interests of his fighter. Promoter Bob Arum was well-connected and built stars better than anyone else in the business. With their help, Mancini (who was already a matchmaker's dream) became, in Kriegel's words, "The Last White Ethnic, more valiant than violent, a redemptive fable produced by CBS Sports."

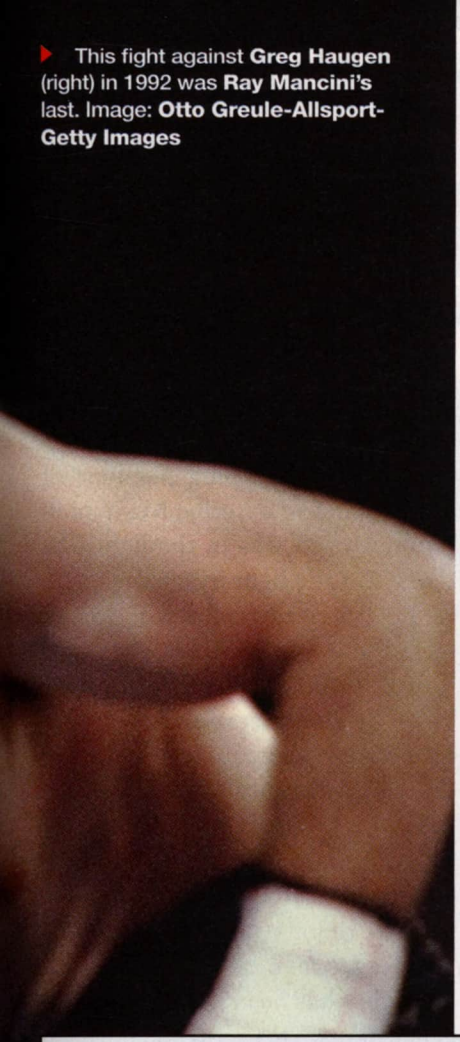
Ray turned pro in 1979 at age 18. On Oct. 3, 1981, he challenged Alexis Arguello for the WBC lightweight crown. Asked by a reporter if he was ready to fight an opponent of Arguello's caliber, Ray answered, "Why don't you ask my father how many title shots you get?" In private, he was more to the point: "How the fuck can you call yourself a fighter and say 'no' to a world title? How is anyone going to believe in me if I don't believe in myself?"

Arguello broke Mancini down round by round en route to a 14th-round stoppage. Seven months later, Ray got a crack at WBA beltholder Arturo Frias.

"It's bullshit that I control the WBA," Arum said after Mancini KO'd Frias in the first round. "When I want something done, I have to pay off [Pepe] Cordero. Anytime you want a fix in the WBA, you bribe Cordero and he takes care of it. Cordero took me to the cleaners. Half a million bucks [in various inducements to make Frias-Mancini]."

On Nov. 13, 1982, at age 21, Mancini defended his WBA title against Duk-Koo Kim. It was a brutal back-and-forth slugfest. Kim collapsed in the 14th round and died four days later. Kriegel explores the fight and its emotional impact on Mancini in detail. There were also economic repercussions.

"Ray Mancini," Kriegel writes, "was boxing's equivalent of the boy next door. Now [Americans] had to



This fight against **Greg Haugen** (right) in 1992 was **Ray Mancini's** last. Image: **Otto Greule-Allsport-Getty Images**

reconcile their trust and affection with the idea that he had taken a life. Negotiations for his endorsements came to an abrupt end. There would be no soft-drink deal, no shoe deal, no apparel deal. The Mancini fable had been corrupted. The All-American boy, a televised icon of righteousness and redemption, now engendered conversations of money and murder."

Arum has similar recollections, noting, "To have him associated with this tragedy cast a pall on the sport. A lot of sponsors had second thoughts, and once that happens, there's no money. If you're an advertiser, you don't want to see death."

More ring conquests followed, but boxing was taking a toll on Mancini.

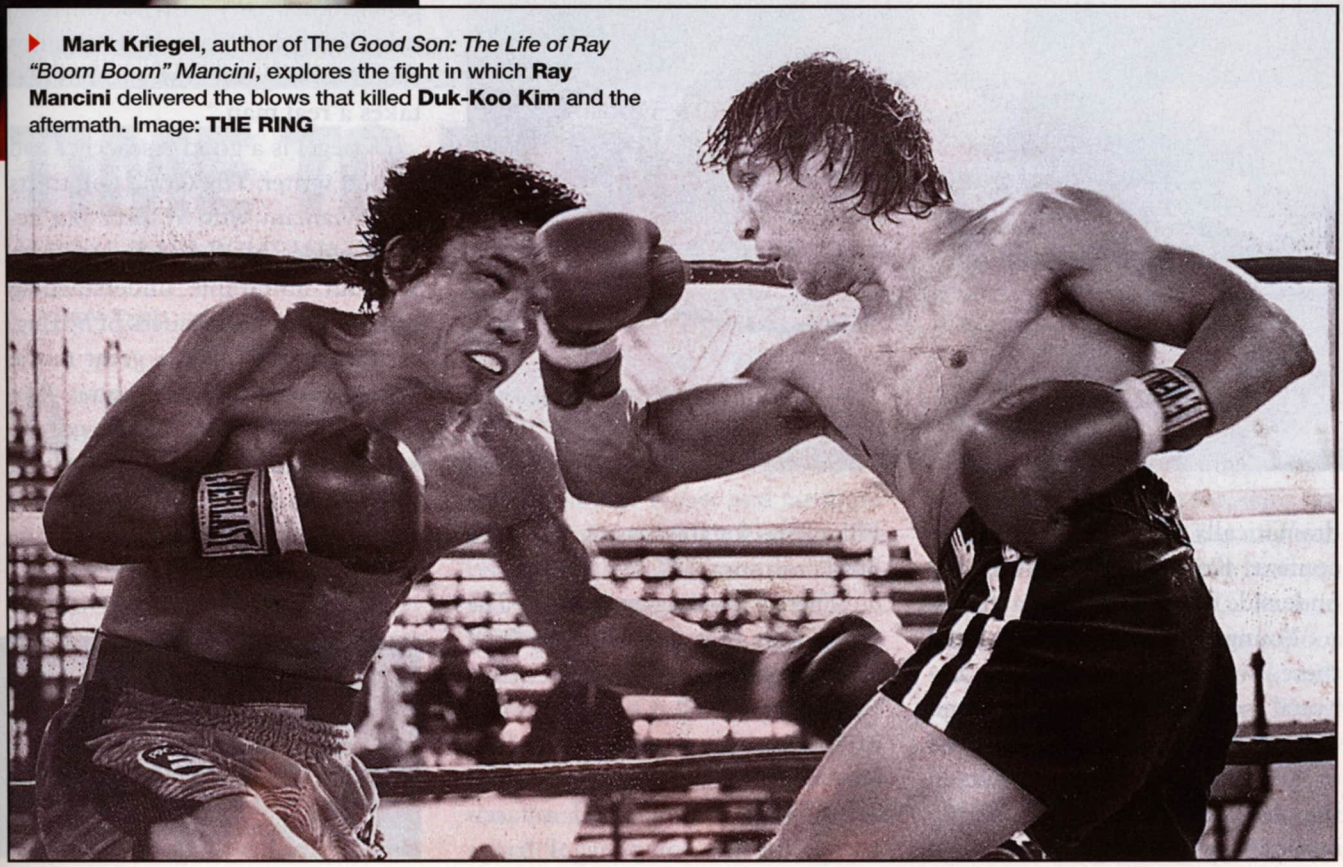
"You feel like Hercules," he'd once said of knocking out an opponent. "You always want the guy to get up after the count of 10. But when you knock him down, it's the greatest feeling in the world. There ain't nothing better than to stand over a man and see him down on the canvas. Nothing."

Now, more and more often, Ray was on the receiving end of the punishment. Looking at his face in the mirror in his dressing room after a victory over Orlando Romero, he told himself, "Oh, God. I don't want this. You can't buy a face."

Mancini lost his title at age 23 when Livingstone Bramble stopped him on cuts in the 14-round. Numerologists might note that the three worst rounds of Ray's life (his knockout losses at the hands of Arguello and Bramble and the punch that sent Duk-Koo Kim to the grave) were all numbered "14."

There were three more fights, all of them losses, spread out over the next seven years. It was during this time that Ray turned to acting on the theory that it might be better to play a fighter on film than to be one.

Kriegel is honest about his subject's strengths and limitations as a fighter. The crossroads fights are



Mark Kriegel, author of The *Good Son: The Life of Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini*, explores the fight in which **Ray Mancini** delivered the blows that killed **Duk-Koo Kim** and the aftermath. Image: **THE RING**

Ray Mancini has grown as a person in retirement. Image: **Thos Robinson-Getty Images**

dramatically recounted and put in context. Kriegel also explores the underside of the Mancini narrative.

Youngstown, when Ray lived there, was referenced in the national media as "Murdertown" and "Crimetown USA." "Where else in America," Kriegel asks, "would the chairman of the county Democratic Party call the police to arrest FBI agents for trespassing at a mob boss's restaurant?"

There's no suggestion in *The Good Son* that Ray did anything illegal insofar as organized crime was concerned. But more than one of Ray's older relatives was affiliated with the mob. And there were times when Ray showed a fascination for the company of fringe mob figures. The "feel-good" stories about the All-American boy didn't mention those associations. Nor did they reference the fact that Ray's older brother was found dead in bed with a bullet that entered his head an inch and a half behind his right ear.

"Neilsen families didn't want to hear that," Kriegel writes. "'Boom Boom' was a family show serialized for Saturday afternoons."

The most gripping portions of *The Good Son* describe Mancini in retirement. "I was in the light," he said. "But the light moved."

Ray cheated on his wife, which led to the end of their marriage. Worse, violence had been passed down from generation to generation in the Mancini home. Kriegel describes in painful detail how Ray became physically abusive toward his own children. To his credit, he eventually confronted the issue and appears to have resolved it.

"Ray broke a pattern of violence that has been in his family for generations," his ex-wife, Carmen, told Kriegel. "Nobody recognizes that. Nobody celebrates it. But that takes a real man."

Kriegel is a good researcher and a good writer. *The Good Son* treats Ray Mancini with respect but acknowledges his flaws. It also conveys an admirable understanding of the sport and business of boxing.

Raging Bull was a great movie because it wasn't just about Jake LaMotta. It explored the generic soul of a fighter. *The Good Son* isn't just a book about Ray Mancini. It's a look into a fighter's soul. ■

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book (*Winks and Daggers: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

Amir Khan is consoled by team members after his stunning knockout loss to **Danny Garcia**. Image: **Jeff Gross-Getty Images**

TIME TO REBUILD — AGAIN

AMIR KHAN MIGHT WANT TO TAILOR HIS STYLE AROUND HIS VULNERABLE CHIN THIS TIME

By **Gavin Evans**

Amir Khan has been getting reacquainted with the British public recently, and the timing couldn't be better.

For three weeks during the Olympics he was on nightly duty for the BBC, making his presence felt on the country's television screens before audiences that regularly exceeded the 10-million mark. He's certainly had his ups and downs since delighting the nation by taking Olympic silver as a precocious 17-year-old eight years ago, and the hard-bitten British boxing public hasn't always been fulsome in their love. But the Olympic crowd is different: far bigger and far more generous. Even Audley Harrison received an unstinting ovation from the 9,000 people who filled London ExCel Arena on semi-finals night.

So for Khan, with his aw-shucks manner and his gushing support for Britain's boxing Olympians, it's been a doddle. And a necessary one too, because at least some of his rebuilding will have to take place at home. "My next fight will be in England — I hope," he said.

Roll back the clock nine months and it all felt so different, with notions of fights in England and getting reacquainted with the base not exactly top of the agenda. Back in December 2011 there was serious talk of an imminent move to welterweight and a fight against Floyd Mayweather Jr. (and a serious belief that he could win).

All he needed was to get past the low-rent Lamont Peterson, who

was considered nothing much, having lost just about every round to Tim Bradley two years earlier. So Amir's management and Golden Boy had no qualms about the fight being held in Peterson's backyard, or about having a local referee on duty, or even about rematch clauses.

And at first, it seemed as if this cavalier attitude was justified. Khan dropped Peterson twice in the opening round (once officially) and predictably seemed too quick, too explosive and too skilled. But Peterson fought back with an intensity he'd never shown before, drawing Khan into a thoroughly satisfying slugfest.

Still, the result was a bit of a shocker: Most viewers seemed to feel that even taking into account the two points oddly deducted from Amir's tally for pushing, he shaded it.

Khan and his people were convinced there was skulduggery about (the "bias" of the local referee, that "mystery man" who was "interfering" with the judges, and so on) but when their attempts to overturn the result failed, they had to settle for buying Peterson's signature for a return.

It seemed like a serious setback but not devastating — as long as Khan took care of business in the return. And it might well have gone to plan had Peterson not made two monumentally stupid decisions, first to have a testosterone implant to counteract his apparent underproduction of the hormone and, second, not to declare this prior to taking a drug test.

When this revelation was belatedly made on the eve of the fight, the event was scuppered and the search went out for a substitute. Again, the chosen candidate seemed like a relatively easy option, with the bonus of the WBC title on line. Danny Garcia was a decent boxer, but he'd struggled against Amir's downmarket countryman, Ashley Theophane, and hadn't exactly overwhelmed Erik Morales. He could box a bit, bang a bit, but nothing spectacular.

Amir Khan will have to overcome another major setback to rebuild his credibility as an elite fighter. Image: **Naoki Fukda**

But Amir was frustrated by having been in training for five months without much of a break, and exasperated by the insults dished out by Garcia's father — including one about Pakistanis not being able to fight (Khan is an Englishman with Pakistan-born parents).

Instead of following instructions by boxing and moving, he opted to trade. For two and a half rounds he appeared to be in a different league from Garcia, but then, late in the third, disaster struck when a perfectly-placed hook connected with Khan's vulnerable chin, just below his ear. After two more knockdowns in the fourth, it was all over and the rebuilding job that had been done so well since his previous knockout defeat (against Breidis Prescott in September 2008) had to start from scratch again.

Asked whether he regretted anything about the way he approached the fight, he said: "The only regret I have is about getting hit by that one big shot that changed the fight." But

that is no more than bravado. Sure, he's had a run of bad luck, but that knockout defeat was about more than just a single lucky punch that landed on the wrong spot.

His Olympic commitment meant the self-analysis and rebuilding could be put on hold — "this period is all about giving my body a bit of a break" — but there is no question that he needs to re-assess his approach to fighting.

The positive dimension is that Khan is not showing signs of being devastated by this defeat (in the way that Ricky Hatton was after being knocked out by Manny Pacquiao). He appears to retain his self-confidence, on the surface at least.

"I am still young, so I've got a lot of time in me," the 25-year-old insisted. "People are going to say things about me because of the Garcia fight, just like they said things about me after the Prescott fight, but I came back from that one, and this time I will come back even stronger. For the moment I will stay at (junior) welterweight because I want a rematch with Garcia, but in the end the decisions about opponents and venues is made by my management team."

The Garcia return makes sense from the getting-back-on-the-horse point of view, but it is unlikely to happen anytime soon. Khan's latest conqueror is booked up until 2013 – he's pencilled in for a return with Morales, and if, as expected, he wins that one, he will have to fight the winner of the Ajose Olusegun-Lucas Matthysse fight, a far tougher assignment.

In any event, Khan needs to start at the shallow end of the pool, not only to rebuild any lost confidence but also to change his style. Already there is talk of moving on from Fred-

die Roach, the Hall of Fame trainer who undertook the last rebuilding effort. In an implied criticism of the time Roach spends with Manny Pacquiao, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. and others in his stable, Khan has said he wants a trainer whose attention is not divided, although no decision has been made yet.

As for comeback opponents, well, the one the British public would plumb for is undoubtedly Prescott. Their last sight of the tall Columbian was of him standing over a prone Khan after two big knockdowns in 54 seconds, and it has perplexed Khan's followers that he hasn't sought revenge in the same way that, say, Lennox Lewis did with Oliver McCall and Hasim Rahman.

The reason always offered by the Khan camp is that Prescott had done nothing to deserve a return (in fact, he's since picked up four losses, albeit two of them on controversial decisions, in 10 fights). But it has always been suspected that the reason also has something to do with styles, and punching power — the fear that Prescott might do the double.

And that is the problem with planning Khan's latest return. We now know for sure that the Prescott result wasn't a fluke and that Britain's most naturally talented boxer has a serious flaw that needs to be worked around: his glass chin.

The first doubts were raised when Khan was dropped heavily by Craig Watson in his final amateur bout. His maiden professional spill came in his 10th bout against the Frenchman Rachid Drilzane, but more serious was the knockdown suffered against the feather-fisted Willie Limond three fights later. He went down, lurched up and went down again — all from one punch. Then in his 18th fight he was dropped again, this time by the super-featherweight Michael Gomez. And then came Prescott.

Amir Khan seemed to be in shock immediately after his brutal knockout loss to **Danny Garcia**. Image: **John Gurzinski-Getty Images**

When he rebuilt at junior welterweight we were told his chin was fine; his problem related to his weight troubles at lightweight. So he moved up and looked suitably impressive in outclassing top men like Andreas Kotelnik and Paulie Malignaggi, but neither were bangers. Marcos Maidana, on the other hand, was the biggest banger in the division, and when it was over, Khan announced, 'I proved tonight I've got a chin." Actually, the verdict was still wide open.

He won that fight legitimately enough, and he somehow managed to stay on his feet during the torrid 10th but he was so wobbly that he came within a punch or two of being stopped.

Four fights later, his record shows that he has been down eight times and has two stoppage defeats in 29 fights. That's chinny. But the story doesn't end there.

Some of the biggest names and best boxers in the sport's history took multiple spills and knockout defeats. Like Khan, Jack Dempsey suffered a one-round knockout defeat and was dropped at least 13 times. Joe Louis was down 10 times and knocked out twice. Ezzard Charles was dropped at least 23 times and stopped seven times. And the modern greats have also

At least **Amir Khan** knows he is capable of rebuilding his career. He had to do it after he was stopped by **Breidis Prescott** in 2008. Image: **John Gichigi-Getty Images**

included their share of chinny boxers — perhaps none more so than Tommy Hearns (dropped nine times and stopped four times).

The point is that you don't need an Oliver McCall beard to reach for greatness. But it helps if you can adjust your style to compensate, something Khan has failed to do thus far. He might take a leaf out of the Wladimir Klitschko book on how to overcome a glass jaw problem.

Unlike his elder brother, Dr. Steelhammer wasn't born with a steel mandible. In his first 47 fights, Wlad was dropped 10 times and stopped three times. But under the tutelage of Emmanuel Steward he improved his footwork and eventually mastered a style that involved keeping opponents at arm's length and tying them up inside. He's now unbeaten in more than eight years, and it's been seven years and 13 fights since anyone put him on his broad back.

Under Roach, Khan has too often fought like he wanted to be Pacman, not least in his last two (losing) fights — an aggressive style that features rapid-fire raids and an inclination to duke it out. Which is all wonderful for his fans, but not for his longevity.

In other words, what might be best for the punters is not best for Amir. He is at his safest when circling opponents and making best use of his superior speed, always mindful of protecting that chin at all costs.

So, whoever takes on Khan's training going forward needs to convince him that, yes, sadly, he is chinny, and therefore he needs to box accordingly. Play it that way and Khan can return from his British rebuilding exercise to reconquer the world, avenge his three defeats — if that's what he needs to do — and resume his post as a major cross-over star of world boxing. It's certainly worth a try. ■

COMPILED BY **MIKE COPPINGER**

Adrien Broner (left) overwhelmed **Vicente Escobedo** in their junior lightweight fight. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

ADRIEN BRONER TKO 5 VICENTE ESCOBEDO

DATE: JULY 21, 2012
SITE: CINCINNATI, OHIO
DIVISION: JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
WEIGHTS: BRONER 133 ½; ESCOBEDO 130
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): BRONER NO. 2; ESCOBEDO UNRATED
NETWORK: HBO

Adrien Broner was a sizeable favorite heading into his bout with Vicente Escobedo. After two failed weigh-in attempts, the fight became an utter mismatch.

Broner (24-0, 20 knockouts) imposed his superior size, speed, power and skills on Escobedo, leading to a fifth round stoppage after trainer Joel Diaz threw in the towel, prompting referee Gary Rosato to end the massacre at 2:45.

The 23-year-old native of Cincinnati badly hurt Escobedo in the second round, then bloodied his nose with pinpoint accuracy in the third. Finally, in the fifth round, Broner opened up a gash over his foe's right eye. Escobedo (26-4, 15 KOs) was already taking a beating when Broner trapped him in the corner and delivered a series of vicious body blows, targeting the left side of Escobedo's mid-section while mixing in debilitating right crosses. When Escobedo brought his guard down, "The Problem" went to head, administering a steady dose of uppercuts and left hooks which wore Escobedo down and led to the stoppage.

The bout almost didn't take place. After Broner missed the 130-pound limit by 3½ pounds, both sides agreed to a second weigh-in the morning of the fight with a limit of 140 pounds. But Broner missed that, too, coming in at 143.2, again putting the match in jeopardy. After lengthy negotiations and money given to Escobedo's side, the fight was on, albeit at a disadvantage to the 30-year-old resident of Woodland, Calif. He was understandably emotional after the fight, feeling he didn't get a fair shake as he struggled to make weight and his opponent didn't.

"I was away from my family, my wife. Just to come here and not get a fair, fair fight [made me emotional]," said Escobedo, whose face was a swollen and bruised mess. "But I came to fight."

Broner announced after the bout he would be going five pounds north to lightweight.

"I'm young. I'm 22. I'm still growing. I just feel like it's time for me to go up," said Broner, who lost his WBO junior lightweight title at the scale. "After this fight, there really wouldn't be a reason for me to stay. I'm just going to go up and give the lightweights hell."

Robert Guerrero (right) defeated **Selcuk Aydin** by a convincing decision. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

ROBERT GUERRERO UD 12
SELCUK AYDIN

DATE: JULY 28, 2012
SITE: SAN JOSE, CALIF.
DIVISION: WELTERWEIGHT
WEIGHTS: GUERRERO 145 ¾; AYDIN 146 ½
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): GUERRERO UNRATED; AYDIN NO. 10
NETWORK: SHOWTIME

Robert Guerrero competed in his sixth weight class and proved he belongs at welterweight with a unanimous decision over previously-undefeated Selcuk Aydin.

After 12 ebb-and-flow rounds, judges Max Deluca and Mark Green scored it 116-112 for Guerrero while Mike Tate had it 117-111.

They fought hard and many rounds were difficult to score. What gave Guerrero the nod on the scorecards? The disparity in punch activity. Guerrero threw 972 punches according to CompuBox, while Aydin elected to load up on power shots, throwing just 528 punches overall.

Aydin (23-1, 17 knockouts) had no qualms with the scoring and blamed only himself.

"The judges were not my problem, I was the problem," Aydin said through an interpreter. "I couldn't do what I wanted to do."

The 28-year-old Turk came on down the stretch, but Guerrero put enough early rounds in the bank to stave off his opponent, winning the first four rounds on two of three cards.

Guerrero hadn't fought in more than 15 months because of a torn rotator cuff suffered while in training for his scheduled bout with Marcos Maidana last August, which was ultimately canceled. While he seemed rusty at times, he engaged in an entertaining scrap: Aydin the bull, Guerrero the matador.

Guerrero, 29, was effective boxing on his back foot and using his educated jab as his foe applied constant pressure. He tried to keep the fight in the center of the ring because Aydin got the better of him whenever his back was against the ropes.

Aydin pressed forward down the stretch as Guerrero seemed to tire, the result of his tremendous punch output as well as Aydin's effective body punching. Aydin landed some devastating shots and staggered Guerrero, whose mouth was agape from exhaustion.

Their faces told the tale of the bout, both peppered with welts, bumps and bruises. It was a taxing affair. That Guerrero came out on top proved his worth at 147 pounds.

"I felt great at welterweight," said Guerrero, who won the vacant WBC interim belt. "I wanted to fight the best. That's why I fought Selcuk. Nobody wanted to fight him in this division but I came in and took care of business.

"I believed in my talent, and I boxed and used by skills."

Guerrero, from nearby Gilroy, Calif., was fighting in front of his hometown fans.

–Mike Coppinger

Welterweight prospect **Keith Thurman** was impressive in his sixth-round knockout of **Orlando Lora**. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

KEITH THURMAN TKO 6 ORLANDO LORA

Highly-touted welterweight prospect Keith Thurman stopped Orlando Lora in the sixth round July 21 in Cincinnati on HBO, Thurman's debut on the premium network.

Thurman, 23, was originally slated to face Marcos Maidana but the Argentine power puncher pulled out, leaving the broadcast with a mismatch on paper, one for which HBO's Jim Lampley apologized. And a mismatch it was.

Lora (29-3-2, 19 knockouts) was outgunned, as the heavy-handed Thurman (18-0, 17 KOs) delivered right hands and body blows before making the 31-year-old Mexican quit in the second half of the fight.

Thurman, of Clearwater, Fla., dropped Lora with a hard combination in the sixth. After Lora made it to his feet, he began walking to his corner and took out his mouthpiece while receiving the mandatory eight-count. Referee Ken Miliner called the bout off at 1:37 of the round.

Lora, who took the bout on two weeks' notice, is now 3-3-1 in his last seven outings.

Thurman called out the best at 147 following the victory and is in line for a meaningful fight in the fall.

ARGENIS MENDEZ UD 12 MARTIN HONORIO

In a rematch of their close fight in May 2010, Argenis Mendez (20-2, 10 knockouts) once again defeated Martin Honorio (32-8-1, 16 KOs). And this time there was no doubt.

The 26-year-old from Bronx, N.Y., won by majority decision in the first bout but earned a unanimous nod in the July 21 rematch in Hollywood, Fla., prevailing by scores of 115-111, 116-110 and 117-109. The bout headlined Telefutura's Solo Boxeo.

Honorio, a 32-year-old Mexican, was the aggressor but Mendez's accurate punching won him rounds. Honorio fouled throughout the match and was penalized twice, once in the ninth for rabbit punches and then again in the 11th for excessive holding.

Shawn Porter (left) got the best of **Alfonso Gomez** in a spirited fight. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

RAYMUNDO BELTRAN MD 10 HANK LUNDY

Hard-luck Raymundo Beltran finally earned a big win with a majority-decision upset of Hank Lundy on ESPN's *Friday Night Fights* on July 27 in Atlantic City, N.J.

Many rounds were close and tough to score but the 31-year-old Mexican earned the nod by scores of 96-94, 96-94 and 95-95.

Beltran pressed the action, finding success when he was able to bully the 28-year-old Philadelphian to the ropes and fight on the inside. When the fight was in the center of the ring, Lundy flourished by using his superior technique.

Lundy (22-2-1, 11 knockouts) appeared lethargic at times, perhaps the result of the chaotic weigh-in a day earlier during which it took him four attempts to successfully make the lightweight limit.

Beltran (26-6, 17 KOs) buzzed Lundy in the waning moments of the third, but Lundy quickly responded with power shots of his own off the ropes.

The judges seemed to favor Beltran's aggressiveness. He had lost two of his previous three (against Sharif Bogere and Luis Ramos) but is now ranked No. 10 by THE RING at 135 with the win. Lundy, who entered the fight at No. 8, fell out of the ratings.

SHAWN PORTER UD 10 ALFONSO GOMEZ

It was the toughest test of Shawn Porter's short career and he passed with flying colors, a comprehensive defeat of trialhorse Alfonso Gomez on the Robert Guerrero-Selcuk Aydin card July 28 in San Jose, Calif.

Porter (20-0, 14 knockouts) won by scores of 96-94, 98-92 and 97-93.

The 24-year-old resident of Cleveland overcame nasty cuts over both eyes (each from a clash of heads), with the gash over the left brow being a particularly gruesome one.

Gomez's jab bothered Porter early on, but his experience was no match for Porter's youth and superior athleticism.

Gomez (23-6-2, 12 KOs) was fatigued down the stretch. He repeatedly fell down – no official knockdowns – from what seemed to be pure exhaustion.

Diego Magdaleno is nearer a title shot after stopping **Antonio Davis.** Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Porter took control of the bout in the fourth round, as he got the better of most exchanges by landing flush with power shots. Gomez, 31, has suffered consecutive losses. He was stopped by Saul Alvarez last September.

ORLANDO SALIDO KO 3 MOISES GUTIERREZ

Orlando Salido, fresh off his second victory over Juan Manuel Lopez, stopped overmatched opponent Moises Gutierrez in the third round July 28 in Salido's native Mexico.

THE RING's No. 2 featherweight battered Gutierrez from the opening bell, stalking his foe and landing often with power shots. Salido, 31, pounded the 33-year-old Chilean to the body, mixing his punches well.

Gutierrez (21-5, 8 knockouts) got a reprieve in the second after taking a low blow, but after that, it was back to sustaining punishment. Salido (39-11-2, 27 KOs) ended matters in the third with a five-punch combination, as referee Gabriel Peralta waved the bout off at 2:49.

Salido is the WBO featherweight beltholder, but the title was not at stake because Salido and Gutierrez weighed 131 and 131½, respectively.

The victory preserved a scheduled fall showdown with fellow 126-pounder Mikey Garcia.

DEONTAY WILDER TKO 1 KERTSON MANSWELL

Heavyweight prospect Deontay Wilder (24-0, 24 KOs) continued his string of knockouts with a first-round stoppage of Kertson Manswell on Aug. 4 in Wilder's native Alabama, the main event of a Fox Sports Net card.

The 2008 Olympic bronze medalist displayed his punching prowess, knocking down his foe three times. Manswell (22-6, 17 KOs) beat the count after the first knock down but was soon down again, the result of a combination. Moments later, he was down a third time and the bout was over as referee Keith Hughes mercifully waved it off at 2:10.

Wilder, whose competition has been weak, seems to be ready for a more-serious test.

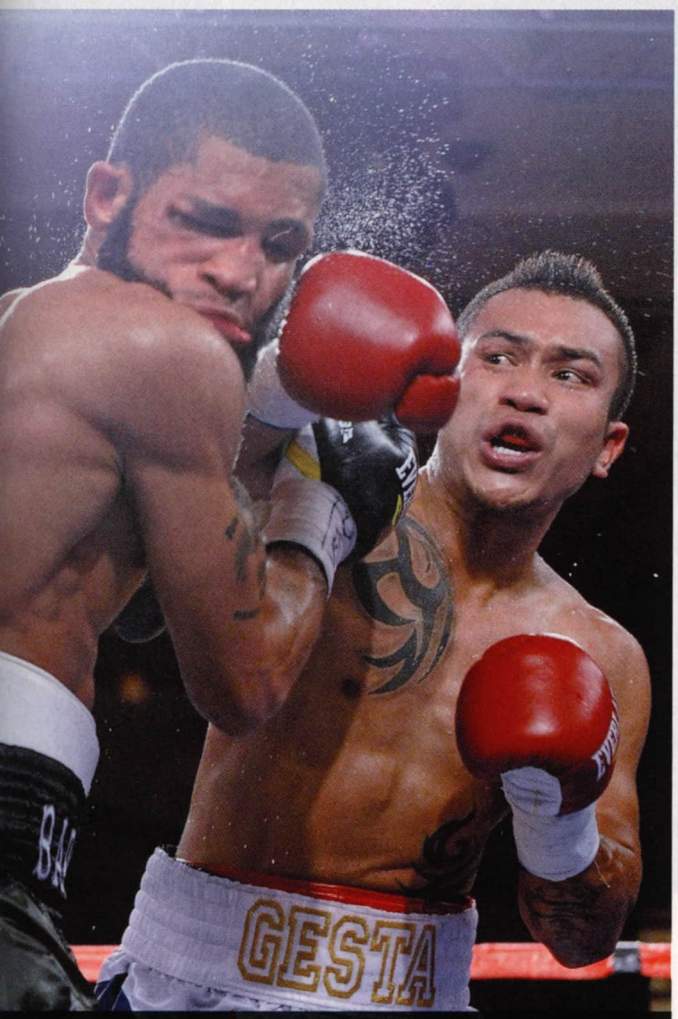
DIEGO MAGDALENO TKO 4 ANTONIO DAVIS

Diego Magdaleno is on the precipice of a title shot after a four-round destruction of Antonio Davis on Aug. 4 in Las Vegas, the main event of *Solo Boxeo* on Telefutura.

The 25-year-old Las Vegas-based fighter, ranked No. 5 at junior lightweight by THE RING, outclassed the badly-faded 40-year-old from Atlanta from the opening bell.

Magdaleno delivered punches from angles, punishing his slower foe and beating him to the punch consistently. In the closing moments of the fourth round, Magdaleno, 25, stunned Davis (29-8, 13 knockouts) with a left uppercut and then seized the moment, pouncing on Davis until referee Joe Cortez stepped in at 2:59.

Magdaleno (23-0, 8 KOs) will likely go on to a meaningful fight at 130 now, while Davis has gone 3-4 in his last seven with each loss coming by knockout. ■



Ty Barnett (left) could only last nine rounds against **Mercito Gesta**. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

HEAVYWEIGHTS
DEONTAY WILDER KO 1 KERTSON MANSWELL
GONZALO BASILE KO 4 MARCELO ULISES PONCE
TRAVIS KAUFFMAN W 7 CHARLES DAVIS

CRUISERWEIGHTS
ALEJANDRO VALORI KO 6 ROGELIO ROSSI
DANNY GREEN KO 5 DANNY SANTIAGO
PIETER CRONJE KO 10 OSCAR SIALE
ANATOLIY DUDCHENKO W 8 ALFREDO CONTRERAS

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
FULGENCIO ZUNIGA KO 7 ALEJANDRO BERRIO
VYACHESLAV UZELKOV W 12 MOHAMED BELKACEM
SEAN MONAGHAN KO 3 GEORGE ARMENTA
MIKE LEE KO 2 TYLER SEEVER

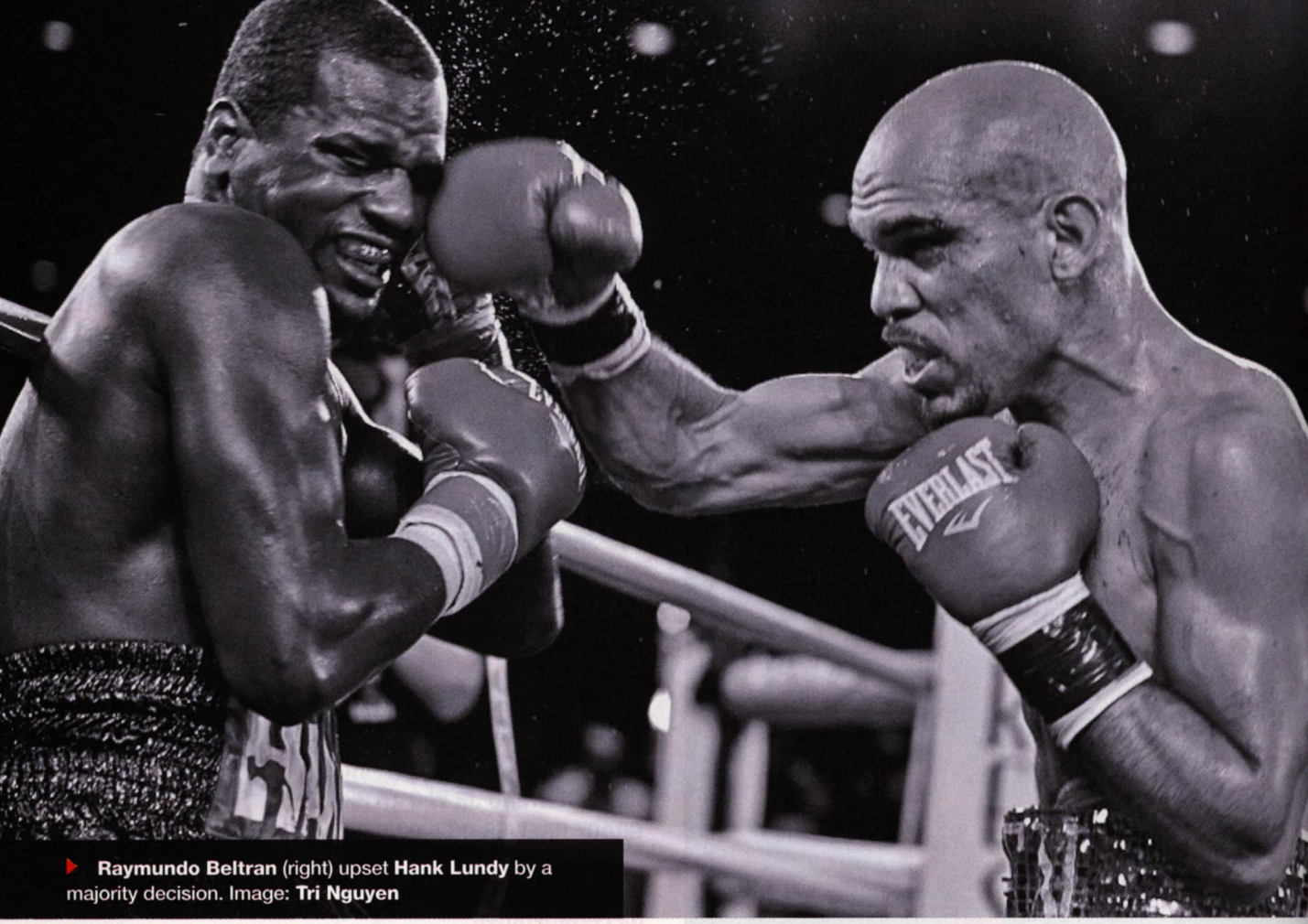
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
ALEXANDER BRAND W 10 RUBEN ACOSTA
NIKOLA SJEKLOCA W 10 HADILLAH MOHOUMADI
FARAH ENNIS W 10 RICHARD PIERSON
GEORGE GROVES KO 6 FRANCISCO SIERRA
THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN W 12 ROWLAND BRYANT
SHAWN ESTRADA KO 2 FELIX PIEDRA

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
DENIS SAIONI W 12 JOZSEF MATOLCSI
ELVIN AYALA KO 9 JOHN MACKEY
ALVARO GAONA W 12 OCTAVIO CASTRO
LES SHERRINGTON W 12 YORI BOY CAMPAS
BRIAN VERA W 12 SERGIO MORA

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
JAVIER MACIEL W 10 MATEO VERON
JORGE PAEZ JR. W 10 OMAR CHAVEZ
KEITH THURMAN KO 6 ORLANDO LORA
HUGO CENTENO JR W 8 AYI BRUCE
GRADY BREWER DQ 5 GIORBIS BARTHELEMY

WELTERWEIGHTS
DIEGO CHAVES KO 2 ISMAEL EL MASSOUDI
ED PAREDES KO 10 VIVIAN HARRIS
BETHEL USHONA W 12 ISAAC HLATSHWAYO
ROBERT GUERRERO W 12 SELCUK AYDIN
SHAWN PORTER W 10 ALFONSO GOMEZ
JULIO DIAZ KO 5 HENRY AURAD
PABLO MUNGUIA KO 10 GUSTAVO GARIBAY
JOSE BENAVIDEZ KO 4 JAVIER LOYA
TEERACHAI KRATINGDAENGGYM KO 5 MEIRBEK SABIROV
LOVEMORE NDOU W 12 GAIRY ST CLAIR
DANIEL SANDOVAL KO 6 GABRIEL MARTINEZ

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
PABLO CESAR CANO TECH. WIN 7 JOHAN PEREZ
MANUEL PEREZ W 10 JOSE MIGUEL COTTO
ALBERTO MOSQUERA W 11 MIGUEL CALLIST
JOAN GUZMAN KO 1 JORGE PIMENTEL
OMAR FIGUEROA W 10 DOMINIC SALCIDO
MERCITO GESTA KO 9 TY BARNETT
MASAO NAKAMURA KO 1 BUDI RISKY
VICTOR CAYO KO 3 JULIO DE JESUS
JUAN CARLOS ABREU KO 3 JOHN NATER



Raymundo Beltran (right) upset **Hank Lundy** by a majority decision. Image: **Tri Nguyen**

LIGHTWEIGHTS

ART HOVHANNISYAN W 10 MIGUEL ACOSTA
JORGE ROMERO KO 4 RODOLFO LOPEZ
DEJAN ZLATICANIN KO 8 BAHROM PAYOZOV
YOSHITAKA KATO KO 1 KOTA KOIKE
RAYMUNDO BELTRAN W 10 HANK LUNDY
MIGUEL ROMAN W 10 DANTE JARDON
PAULUS MOSES W 10 CASSIUS BALOYI
DARLEY PEREZ W 10 BAHODIR MAMADJONOV
DANIEL ESTRADA KO 11 ADRIAN VERDUGO
MASON MENARD W 8 IVAN OTERO
NIHITO ARAKAWA KO 8 TAKEHIRO SHIMADA

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

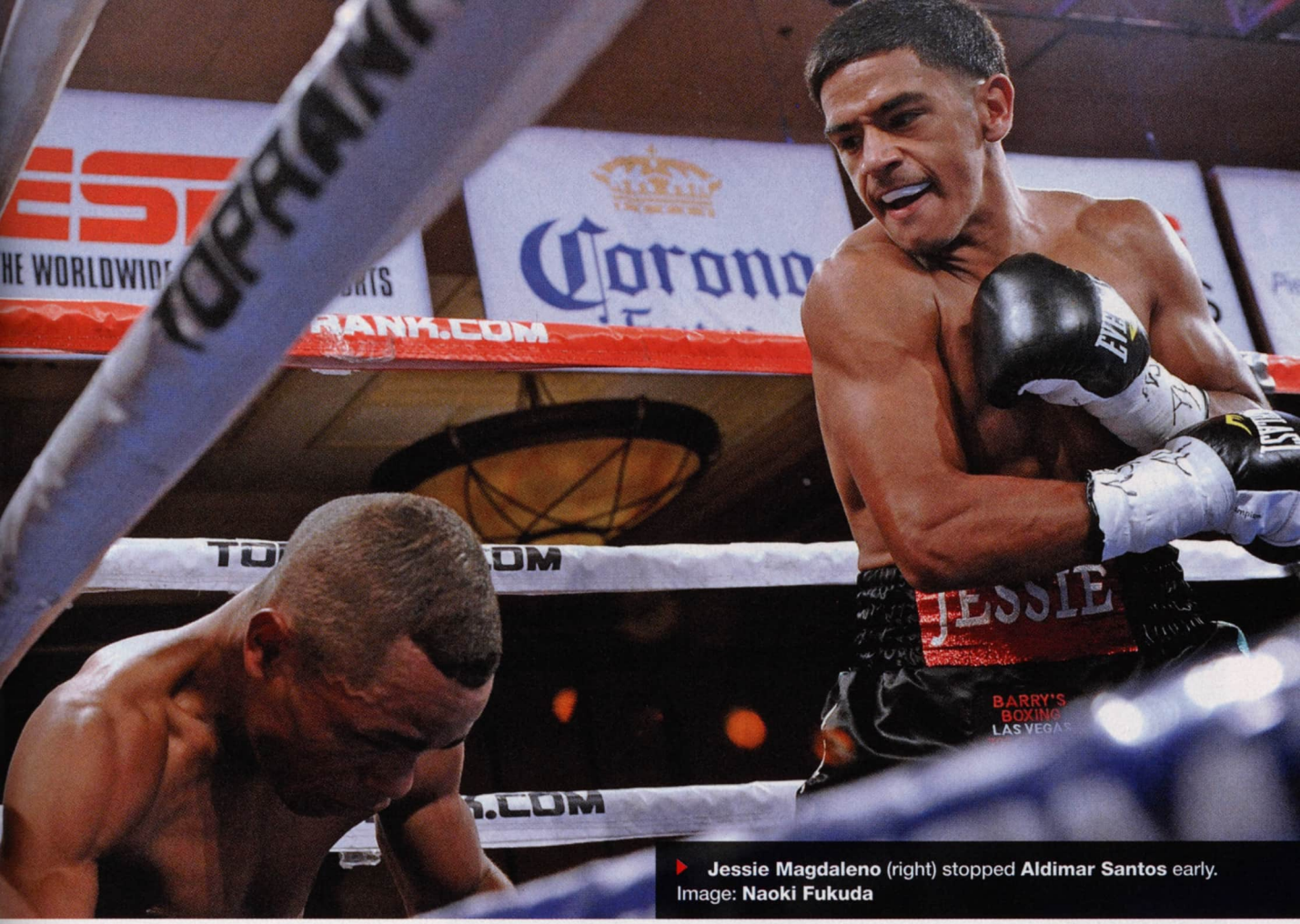
JUAN CARLOS BURGOS KO 3 CESAR VAZQUEZ
DEVIS BOSCHIERO W 12 ERMANO FEGATILLI
BRYAN VASQUEZ KO 9 JORGE LACIERVA
ARGENIS MENDEZ W 12 MARTIN HONORIO
ADRIEN BRONER KO 5 VICENTE ESCOBEDO
RONNY RIOS KO 9 DAVID RODELA
DIEGO MAGDALENO KO 4 ANTONIO DAVIS
EDGAR PUERTA KO 8 CARLOS CARDENAS

FEATHERWEIGHTS

HISASHI AMAGASA W 10 TAKUYA WATANABE
NICHOLAS WALTERS KO 4 GUSTAVO SANDOVAL
CLAUDIO MARRERO KO 3 JUAN JOSE BELTRAN
JORGE LARA W 12 CESAR JUAREZ
ORLANDO SALIDO KO 3 MOISES GUTIERREZ
AKIFUMI SHIMODA W 10 RICHARD BETOS
PATRICK HYLAND W 8 CARLOS FULGENCIO
ANTONIO ESCALANTE KO 2 LEONILO MIRANDA
(F) DAHIANA SANTANA KO 7 MARISOL REYES
LORENZO VILLANUEVA DQ 6 SONNY GONZALES

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

SOD KOKIETGYM KO 1 FRANS YARANGGA
JESSIE MAGDALENO KO 2 ALDIMAR SILVA SANTOS
ARTURO REYES W 12 KHABIR SULEYMANOV
HIDENORI OTAKE W 10 TAKAFUMI NAKAJIMA
CHRIS AVALOS W 10 YENIFEL VICENTE
(F) KATY WILSON CASTILLO W 10 CRYSTAL HOY
VICTOR TERRAZAS KO 6 EDUARDO GARCIA
HUGO CAZARES W 12 DANIEL DIAZ
EITA KIKUCHI W 10 NOULDY MANAKANE



Jessie Magdaleno (right) stopped **Aldimar Santos** early. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

BANTAMWEIGHTS
JUAN PAYANO KO 9 JOHN ALBERTO MOLINA
JULIO CEJA KO 3 GENARO CAMARGO
PAULUS AMBUNDA W 12 WILLIAM PRADO
MARK ANTHONY GERALDO KO 8 JESSIE TUYOR

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
HIROYUKI HISATAKA KO 4 TETSUYA HISADA
TEIRU KINOSHITA W 10 ATSUSHI KAKUTANI
MARCO DEMECILLO KO 7 JEFFREY CERNA
DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT W 12 RODEL QUILATON
JUAN ALBERTO ROSAS W 10 JOSE VARGAS
JOHNNY GARCIA W 8 MANUEL VARGAS
RYO AKAHO KO 8 YOHEI TOBE

FLYWEIGHTS
ADRIAN HERNANDEZ W 10 IVAN DIAZ
DENCHAILEK KRATINGDAENGGYM KO 2 WILBUR ANDOGAN
EDGAR SOSA KO 8 SHIGETAKA IKEHARA
DANNY FLORES KO 6 FAUSTINO CUPUL
(F) IRMA SANCHEZ W 10 SHARON GAINES
EDRIN DAPUDONG KO 1 NELSON LLANOS

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS
IVAN MENESES W 12 LUIS CEJA
VERGILIO SILVANO KO 4 CHARLIE CABILLA
(F) YESICA YOLANDA BOPP W 10 YESENIA CASTREJON
JOHNRIEL CASIMERO W 12 PEDRO GUEVARA
JAVIER MENDOZA KO 2 CRISTIAN AGUILAR
NETHRA SASIPRAPA KO 5 JACK AMISA

STRAWWEIGHTS
JUAN HERNANDEZ KO 2 LORENZO TREJO
YADER CARDOZA W 10 JOSE AGUILAR

Retired judge **Chuck Giampa's** lack of focus once cost **Nigel Benn** (above) a victory. Image: **John Gichigi-Getty Images**

SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

By **Chuck Giampa**

Every judge has an off night. My worst came on March 2, 1996, when Nigel Benn and Thulani Malinga fought for the WBC super middleweight title in Newcastle, England.

First, some background. My mother died in 1993 of lung cancer. Her condition was misdiagnosed for about a year before her physician finally made the decision to give a simple chest X-ray. She was immediately put in the hospital, though that same physician refused to explain to her the details of her condition. In fact, he asked me to inform my mother that the tumor in her lung was inoperable. She died two weeks later.

My family eventually filed a wrongful death suit against the doctor. I received a call from our attorney on March 1, 1996, one day before the championship fight, informing me that the physician and his insurance company were willing to accept responsibility and offer a settlement. In relaying the details to my brother and sister, all the bad memories surrounding my mother's avoidable suffering resurfaced. That's where my mind was over the next few days.

I chose to judge the fight even though my focus and concentration during the action were not up to par. In retrospect, I should have told the supervisor of the fight about the phone call from my attorney and then withdrawn as a judge. If I had done so, I don't know what the final score would have been, but I owed it to the fighters to withdraw since I wasn't completely prepared that night.

The result of my bad judgment? I scored the fight 114-112 for Malinga, who won a split decision. However, I realized afterward that I scored two rounds for Malinga that Benn deserved to win, meaning Benn would've won the fight had my mind been clear of distractions.

Over the years, I've had many discussions with other officials about taking themselves off fights because of distracting outside forces. Most of them admitted to having such influences on the days of fights but said that they found it difficult to withdraw. Maybe it's the nature boxing not to give up and fight through adversity.

But I know the choice I made in 1996 was wrong for me and, more importantly, to the fighters. They trained hard for six to nine weeks prior to the fight and they deserved to have officials who were no less than 100 percent focused.

If I could turn back the clock, I certainly would choose differently. That was a painful lesson. ■

Chuck Giampa can be reached at chuckgiampa@aol.com

Susie Ramadan (right, against **Michelle Preston**) is one of three major female titleholders to have emerged from Australia. Image: **Mark Metcalfe-Getty Images**

AUSTRALIA'S TERRIFIC TRIO

By **David A. Avila**

Australia has produced a number of successful male boxers over the generations, including champions such as Lionel Rose and Jeff Fenech.

Women's boxing? The land down under seemed to be the lost continent when it came to females. Until recently. A strong group of women has emerged from Australia, led by a talented triumvirate of titleholders.

Susie Ramadan, Erin McGowan and Diana Prazak, who hail from different parts of the country, are among the best in the world. And all three are unafraid to venture to other countries — Mexico, Argentina, the U.S. — to prove their mettle.

Here is a look at Australia's mighty trio.

SUSIE RAMADAN

Ramadan (23-1, 8 knockouts) discovered boxing because she lacked direction and was "picked on in the rough areas of Melbourne" as a kid, she said. After trying team sports and dancing, she stumbled upon a boxing gym and felt an urge to investigate.

"One day I was driving and noticed some people outside a gym punching pads. I thought to myself, 'this may be the key to discipline myself,'" Ramadan said, adding that the gym supervisors felt she was too small to fight but allowed her to train.

"From that first day I was the first person at the gym and the last one to leave. I trained so hard every day to show them I was keen and really wanted to fight. They then noticed and gave me the chance."

In a span of less than four years, Ramadan has racked up a nearly perfect record and won the IBF bantamweight title in February of last year. Then she willingly traveled to Mexico to face Yazmin

Rivas for her first title defense. Though she lost by split decision, it remains a great moment in her boxing career.

"Fighting in Mexico was different; it was the first time away from home. However, an experience never forgotten," Ramadan said. "The Mexicans love their boxing so it was good having the chance to show the boxing-lovers my skills."

Any time a fighter competes in another country it's a big risk, but Ramadan and the other Aussie girls are more than willing.

"We have the courage to travel overseas because this is the fight game. If you're scared, you're in the wrong game," Ramadan said.

Of course, Ramadan doesn't mind fighting at home. On July 13, in Flemington, Australia, she outfought Thailand's Usanakorn Kokietgym (12-2, 11 KOs) in a grueling battle to win the WBC bantamweight title by a unanimous decision.

It was her second world title at that weight but she couldn't have been more excited.

"I'm speechless, and it has not yet sunk in that I am the WBC bantamweight world champion," said Ramadan, 33, who lives in Preston, Australia. "It is a dream come true."

DIANA PRAZAK

Prazak has taken that concept of fighting on foreign soil one step further. The junior lightweight boxer from Melbourne has moved to Los Angeles and is currently training with Lucia Rijker.

It's a radical change, but one she insists was necessary to reach her goal.

"I just want to be the best that I can be and continue to grow in the sport and continue to learn, to reach my highest potential," said Prazak, 31. "I don't think anybody in any sport wants to just be mediocre and cruise along and never really achieve anything."

"I JUST WANT TO BE THE BEST THAT I CAN BE AND CONTINUE TO GROW IN THE SPORT AND CONTINUE TO LEARN, TO REACH MY HIGHEST POTENTIAL."

– DIANA PRAZAK

Prazak was eager to meet Rijker, a former world champion who many consider the greatest female prizefighter of all time.

"To be honest, I knew she was the trainer for me when I started working with her," Prazak said. "She's the best of the best when it comes to female boxing. I don't think anyone can come up with one better. To be the best you have to be trained by the best. She's got a lot of knowledge she is able to share with me."

Prazak (11-1, 7 KOs) earned the WIBA junior lightweight title by stopping Canada's dangerous puncher Lyndsay Garbatt (7-5-1, 3 KOs) at the end of the ninth round last September in Australia. The Canadian had wins over Jelena Mrdjenovich, Melissa Hernandez and a knockout of Maureen Shea. All of those fighters are current or former world titleholders.

"It was a war of a fight," said Prazak, who was knocked down in Round 1 but rallied. "Lyndsay is an amazing fighter. You don't get to be a world champion without being an exciting fighter, and Lyndsay was all of that. She was tough, exciting and skillful. Neither of us gave up throughout the nine rounds. It was definitely the toughest fight of my career and fondest memory.

"The whole experience was amazing," she said.

ERIN MCGOWAN

Boxing opportunities for women are particularly scarce on the west coast of Australia. McGowan is from Perth.

"Women's boxing is a little quieter on the west side of Australia as it is so far from the eastside," says McGowan, adding that it takes five hours by jet to reach Melbourne. "However, Western Australia is very proud of it athletes, so I have a great home fan base here and throughout Australia."

Thirsting for competition, McGowan (14-1, 7 KOs) accepted a fight in Argentina in a heavier weight class and lost by majority decision to WBC junior welterweight titleholder Monica Acosta (17-0-2, 3 KOs).

"I was badly robbed of the decision, and felt devastated at the time. I know Monica knows she lost and so did the crowd," says McGowan, 31, who began boxing to improve her fitness. "I learned a lot from that experience and if anything it made me tougher."

It gets worse. Before going to Argentina, McGowan's WBO lightweight title was stripped by that organization for reasons unexplained. However, she has bounced back from the double setback: She was scheduled to travel to Belgium to challenge Delfine Persoon (19-1, 7 KOs) for the vacant IBF lightweight title on Sept. 21.

The willingness to travel is a common thread among the three Aussie champions who are in constant pursuit of excellence.

"You have to have confidence and believe in yourself to achieve. That's why we are so willing to travel for bigger opportunities and a chance to show our abilities," said Ramadan.

Australian female boxing is no longer lost. ■

Audley Harrison is seen by some as a shot fighter but he has more experience than anyone **David Price** has faced. Image: **Mike Hewitt-Getty**

IS HARRISON A THREAT?

By **Don Stradley**

It's hard to believe Audley Harrison is nearly 41 years old. Time has flown since he emerged from the 2000 Sydney Olympics as a gold medal winner. Back then he was a big lefty with a cocky attitude and a heavy punch; many speculated that he might succeed Lennox Lewis as the sport's premiere heavyweight. He certainly looked the part as he plowed through his first 19 opponents. Since then, Harrison's career has been one disappointment after another. His pathetic effort during a stoppage loss to David Haye two years ago convinced many that his fighting days were over.

Fortunately for Harrison, boxing has a way of recycling its contenders. He is returning to the ring on Oct. 13 at the Echo Arena in Liverpool, England, to face the UK's latest 'heavyweight of the future,' David Price. The jury is out as to whether Harrison is stepping into the ring as a competitor or a trial horse.

Price (13-0, 11 knockouts) a bronze medalist at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and current owner of the British and Commonwealth heavyweight belts, is as big as a mountain and has stopped seven consecutive opponents. However, Price has yet to face anyone of more than middling talent.

Harrison (28-5, 21 KOs) is viewed by many as a shot fighter, but he's far more experienced and accomplished than anyone else on Price's ledger. As for Price's towering height at 6-foot-8, Harrison is no dwarf; he is a shade under 6-foot-6, he generally outweighs Price by a dozen pounds or so and also beats Price in reach, 86 to 82 inches. These physical dimensions combined with Harrison's experience may make for an interesting evening, or at least not the blowout most are expecting.

Another reason Price shouldn't take Harrison lightly is that the old campaigner can still punch a bit. In his first appearance since the Haye debacle, a fourth-round TKO of Ali Adams on May 26, Harrison didn't look great, but he shook off some ring rust. Still, Harrison doesn't blame those who see him as easy pickings for Price.

"My career has had tremendous highs and incredible lows," Harrison told the UK's *Daily Mail*. "I've ridden the ship as best I can. On a few occasions I haven't shown up which has really hurt my reputation, but I will show up in Liverpool. I have the spirit and tenacity to dust myself off and give it another go."

ALSO ...

WBO junior middleweight titleholder Zaurbek Baysangurov defends his belt on Oct. 6 against Lukas Konecny in Kiev, Ukraine. In London that same night, Wayne Reed meets Rocky Fielding in a 10-rounder at super middleweight, while Derry Mathews, Gary Sykes, Stephen Jennings, Liam Walsh and others meet in a one-night tourney called "Prizefighter: Lightweights."

Oct. 20 will see Guillermo Jones in Moscow defending his WBA cruiserweight belt against Denis Lebedev, while A.J. Banal battles Punglung Sor Singyu in Pasay City, Philippines, for the vacant WBO bantamweight belt. ■

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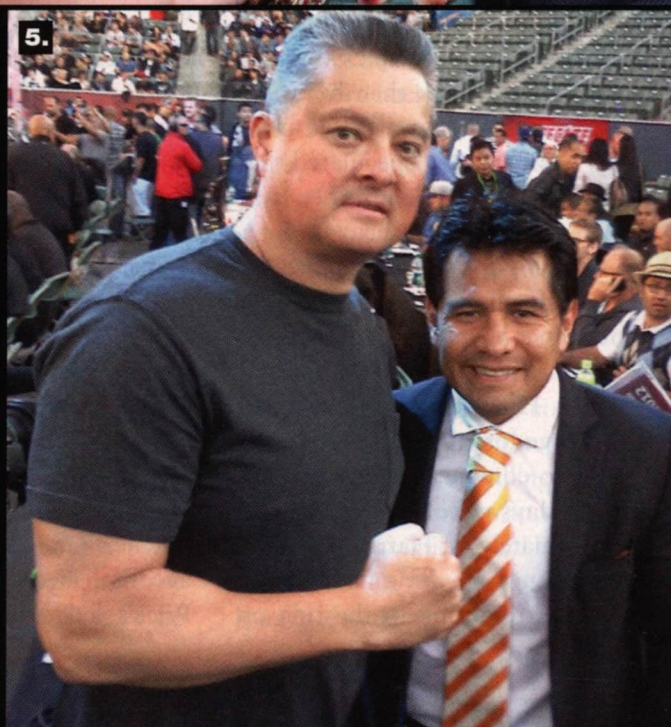
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1. Andres Alarcon (left) with Lucas Matthysse at the Victor Ortiz-Josesito Lopez weigh-in in Hollywood, Calif. **2.** Four-year-old Xavier "The Force" Fernandez and Irish Mickey Ward in Burbank, Ill. **3.** Gilbert Rodriguez (right) with Shane Mosley at the Bernard Hopkins-Enrique Ornelas fight in Philadelphia **4.** Donovin Aldana with Oscar De La Hoya at the Amir Khan-Danny Garcia fight in Las Vegas. **5.** Larry Sanders (left) and Marco Antonio Barrera at the Nonito Donaire-Jeffrey Mathebula fight in Carson, Calif.

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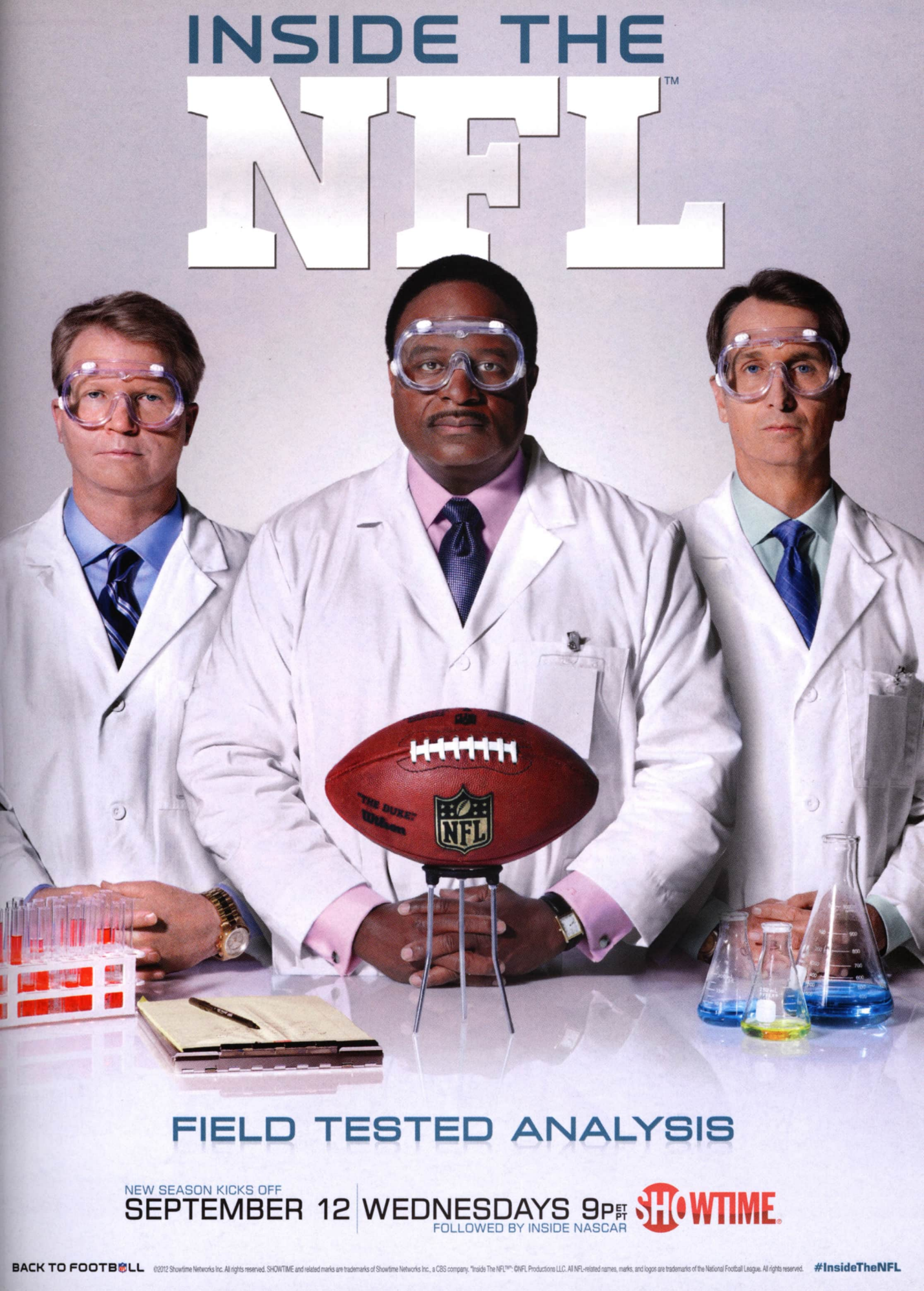
Send us your photos from a fight with you posing next to a celebrity, athlete, or other famous person and we will consider it for publication in the magazine. Send photos to **celebrityphotos@sepublications.com.** Make sure to include your name(s), celebrity name(s), the fight attended, and your contact information. See you at the fights!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